# GARO AND KHASI 000

*A Comparative Study*
*in Matrilineal Systems*

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*NOUVELLE SÉRIE V*

PARIS MOUTON & CO THE HAGUE
MCMLXVII

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CHIE NAKANE

# GARO AND KHASI

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## *A Comparative Study in Matrilineal Systems*

PARIS MOUTON & CO THE HAGUE
MCMLXVII

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*TO MY FRIENDS* 000
*IN THE GARO AND KHASI HILLS*
without whose help this book
could not have been written.

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15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

## CONTENTS

000

Preface 13

Part I. GARO SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Chap. I. *Introduction* 19
  1. Ecological Background. 19
  2. Distribution and Organization of Unilineal Groups. 23

Chap. II. *The Relation of Village Community to Kinship Structure* 29
  1. Economic and Political Background. 29
  2. Setting and Composition of the Population of Rombagre. 38
  3. The Principles of Garo Cross-cousin Marriage and its Functional Importance. 45
  4. Interpretations of Discrepancies between the Ideal Rule and the Empirical Facts. 55
  5. Nokmaship and Power Relations among Families in a Village Community. 60
  6. Formation and Stability of the Domestic Family. 66

Chap. III. *Social Change in Villages near the Plain* 79

Part II. KHASI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Chap. I. *Introduction* 95

Chap. II. *Village Community* 100
  1. Setting and Economic Background of Sohkynioh and Kongtien. 100
  2. Village Endogamy 105

[P. 9]

000

CHAP. III. *Kinship Structure and its Implications in Various Forms of Marriage* 117

1. Kinship Terminology and Selection of Spouse. 117
2. Principle of Descent and Succession. 119
3. Residential Unit. 121
4. Marriage with the Heiress. 125
5. Marriage with the Non-heiress. 129
6. Marriage of the Man of Authority of an *Iing*. 133
7. Polygyny. 135

DISCUSSION OF MATRILINEAL SYSTEMS

APPENDIX *Some Additional Information from Shella and Jatinga* 165

BIBLIOGRAPHY 179

# DIAGRAMS

000

## MAPS

1. Location of the Garo Hills and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. 13
2. Map of the Garo Hills with Classification of Groups. 20
3. Village Land of Rombagiri. 30
4. Distribution of Jhum Field for Each Household of Rombagiri in 1955. 31
5. The Area including Rombagiri under the Same *Loshor*. 32
6. Distribution of Villages in Atong and Gara-Ganching Area. 35
7. Distribution of the Houses of Rombagiri. 39
8. Map of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills with Classification of Groups. 96
9. Distribution of Sections in Shella Village. 166

## FIGURES

1. Ground Plan of a Typical Garo House. 40
2. Scheme of Garo Kinship Terminology. 43
3. Diagram showing Successions of *Nokma* of Rombagiri. 49
4. Possible Shift of the Succession to the *Noh* by Marriage Relations. 50
5. *Noh-chamé* Relations. 52
6. The Network of Cross-cousin Marriages between Chambugong and Agitok in Rombagiri. 54
7. Cross-cousin Relations with the Third Local Lineages of Rombagiri. 57
8. Genealogical Relations of Inhabitants of Rinsibara in February 1956. 82
9. Genealogical Relations of Rombagiri and Rinsibara. 85
10. Kinship and Household Location in Sohkynduh. 114
11. Composition of the Members of an *Iing*. 120
12. Succession Lines of Female and Male in the Matrilineal System. 142
13. Central Core of Matrilineages in Relation to Property Groups and Residential Groups. 143

## LISTS

000

1. The Household Heads and their Wives of Rombagiri. 41
2. Numbers by *Mahari* of Individuals named in List 1. 42
3. Numbers by *Mahari* of Household Heads and their Wives of Emangiri. 59
4. Household Heads and their Wives of Rinsibara. 83
5. Names of Villages of Immigrants and of Emigrants to and from Rinsibara. 86
6. House-owners and their Spouses of Sohkynduh. 107-108
7. Numbers by *Kur* of Individuals named in List 6. 108
8. Actual Descent Links found among House-owners of Sohkynduh. 109
9. House-owners and their Spouses of Kongton. 109-110
10. Numbers by *Kur* of Individuals named in List 9. 110-111
11. Actual Descent Links found among House-owners of Kongton. 111

## PLATES

A. Garo houses at Silcochigiri village.
B. Garo house taken from back side, at Rombagiri village.
C. Garo women of Emangiri Village.
D. Preparation of *deranga* (funeral alter) at Rombagiri.
E. Khasi Jhum fields near Kongton village.
F. Khasi House at Sohkynduh village.
G. Old Khasi women of Kongton village.
H. Young Khasi women of Shella village.

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[104]

• Spelling of Garo and Khasi names in this volume follows local usage in each case, not the standard orthography.

# PREFACE

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The purpose of this monograph is to present theoretical problems of Garo and Khasi social organization in relation to those of other matrilineal systems. In fact, the study of these two matrilineal systems has led me to enquire into many other matrilineal systems, as will appear throughout my discussion in Parts I and II. As a result, I think I have reached certain conclusions of theorical interest concerning matrilineal systems as a whole; these are presented in the last part of the book.

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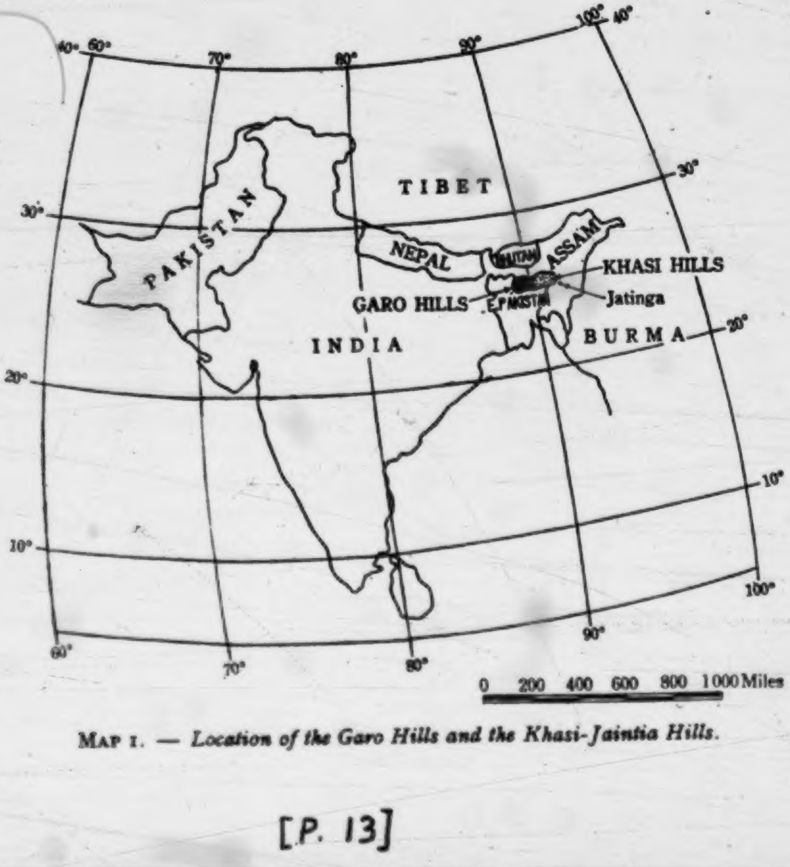
40°
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TIBET
PAKISTAN
NEPAL
BHUTAN
ASSAM
KHASI HILLS
Jatinga
GARO HILLS
E. PAKISTAN
INDIA
BURMA
20°
20°
10°
10°
100°
90°
60°
70°
80°
0 200 400 600 800 1000 Miles

MAP I. — *Location of the Garo Hills and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills.*

K a 121 From the beginning of my field work, my interest lay in a *comparative* study of the two systems, not in preparing a complete monograph of the cultures of the two peoples. I used the period of my field research in working among the two peoples alternately, so that I could constantly check from one field to the other as new problems appeared.

K a 114 122 K a 124 122 The period of my field work was very limited (October, 1955-February, 1956). I did not know the vernacular of either the Garo or the Khasi (Since Garo language has much commonness with Tibetan language which I was used to read and speak, I could quickly get used to follow their speech during my field work, but I failed to do so in Khasi language). I employed altogether five local English-speaking interpreters (out of the five, three were pagan, and all had relatives in the villages where I worked). But I already had experience in studying the economic and social organization of other hill peoples in Assam, having carried out two years (1953-1955) field work among tribes in Tripura State and among the Tangkul Nagas in Manipur State, as also among Himalayan peoples. This all helped me a great deal in my work among the Garo and the Khasi, and is one of the reasons why I could collect such a considerable amount of *data*, in spite of the alove mentioned handicaps of my actual field work. (Later on, I carried out field research for four months among the Nayar of Kerala, to provide further *data* for comparative study.

K a 121 The Garo and the Khasi present very different structures from each other. In order to present a more effective picture of each structure, I have used different ways of presentation, each of which brings out certain important theoretical implications. The emphasis is laid accordingly upon different features: in the case of the Garo, it is the marriage system in relation to the village community; in the case of the Khasi, it is variation in marriage forms related to the structure of descent groups.

K G 122 I wish to express my profound gratitude, first of all, to the Elin Wagner Foundation in Stockholm, by whose generous grant the field work of this study was carried out, and next to Professor C. Lévi-Strauss, who has consistently encouraged me to complete this manuscript and has very kindly given me this opportunity for publication. I am greatly indebted also to: Professor Fred Eggan, Professor Raymond Firth, Professor Meyer Fortes, Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf, Dr. E. R. Leach, Dr. Audrey Richards, and Professor D. M. Schneider for much stimulating discussion and helpful comment on the theoretical problems of this study.

I am grateful for invitations from the Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago (1959-1960) and the Department of Cultural Anthropology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London (1960-1961), as also for an association with the Department

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of Anthropology, London School of Economics and Political Science, which allowed me to give series of lectures on this subject. I received great profit from discussions with staff and students of these institutions in the preparation of the final manuscript. I have a special debt to acknowledge also to Professor Sol Tax, who has afforded me consistent help and encouragement in this work. I also had some interesting discussions with Miss A. Pikelis McCormack, and Dr. R. Burling each of whom worked in other areas of the Khasi and Garo Hills. I also wish to express my thanks to Mrs. Fürer-Haimendorf of the School of Oriental and African Studies, and Mrs. Horn of London School of Economics for their kind help with the manuscript.

A major acknowledgement also goes to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research who supported this study, and to the Centre for Advanced Studies in Behavioral Sciences for its hospitality in the summer of 1959 when the first part of this manuscript was prepared.

Finally my most grateful thanks go to the Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, which in its generous appreciation of the needs of a social anthropologist has permitted me to have a sufficient period of research abroad to make this and other studies possible.

*London, February 1961.*

Chie Nakane.

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## *Part I*

# GARO SOCIAL ORGANIZATION *000*

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### CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

## I. ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Garo are one of the groups of hill peoples of Assam. They 101
are in many cultural aspects similar to the Naga, the Kacharee and
other hill tribes, but they are characterized in particular by the matrilineal
system. The Garo occupy the area known as the Garo Hills,
but scattered groups extend for some distance into the plain. Administratively
the Garo Hills form a separate unit which is bordered by
the Goalpara District (mainly part of the Brahmaputra valley) to the
north and west, and the Mymensing District (East Pakistan) to the
south. The eastern border continues to the Khasi Hills where there
lives another people with matrilineal system—the Khasi (see Part II).
The Garo population in this District was estimated at 242,075 in the 161
Census of 1951.

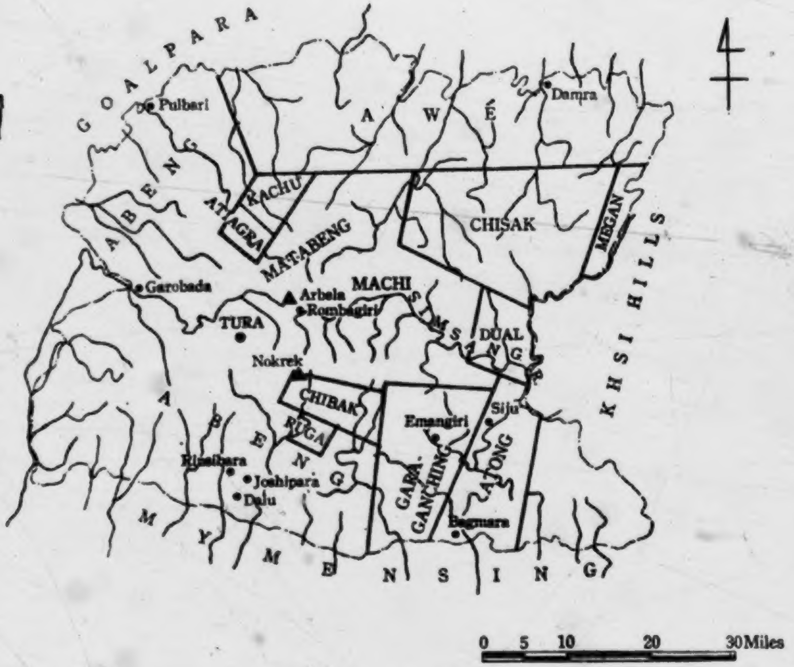
The structure of the Garo economy and society is related to the 133
type of land they occupy. In the heart of the Garo Hills lie the
Nokrek, the Tura and the Arbela Mountains, from which subsidiary
ranges run from west to east. All the rivers in the Garo Hills flow
down from these central ranges to the northern, western and southern
plains. The altitude ranges from 1,000 to 3,000 feet. The climate by 132
Indian standards is moderate, though field workers find it very exhausting
to go through the jungle between the end of February and the
middle of October. After the exhausting tropical heat from February
to April, the monsoon season which lasts from April to September,
brings heavy rainfalls which cause many routes in the Hills to be
blocked. Due to the warm climate, the heavy rainfalls and moderate 137
altitude, the Garo Hills are covered by thick semi-tropical forests 136
where wild elephants, leopards, tigers and other wild animals thrive.
The soil is one of the richest in Assam, producing good crops of rice, 134
cotton, chili, yams, timber and many medicinal plants.

Traditionally the Garo distinguish among themselves a dozen 619

619 groups related to geographical area: namely Akawé (Awé), Chisak, Dual, Machi, Mathabeng, Kochi, Atiagra, Abeng, Chibak, Ruga, Ganching (Gara) and Atong.[1] These twelve groups can be arranged according to social and cultural similarities in the following seven categories:

1. Awé, Chisak and Kachu,
2. Abeng and Atiagra,
3. Machi and Matabeng,
4. Gara-Ganching,
5. Atong,
6. Chibak and Ruga,
7. Dual.[2]

[102]


GOALPARA
Pulbari
AWÉ
Damra
ABENG
KACHU
ATIAGRA
MATABENG
CHISAK
MEGAN
KHASI HILLS
Garobada
Arbela
Rombagiri
MACHI
SIMSANG R.
TURA
DUAL
Nokrek
CHIBAK
RUGA
Siju
Emangiri
ATONG
GARA GANCHING
Joshipara
Dalu
Bagmara
ABENG
MYMENSING
0 5 10 20 30Miles

Map 2. — *Map of the Garo Hills with Classification of Groups.*

[131] The Awé occupy the northern slopes of the Garo Hills and the lower areas joining the Brahmaputra Valley. They are also known as Akawé which means 'plain dwellers' and have many contacts with

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[1] See Playfair, 1909, p. 59.

[2] Besides these seven categories, we might add: 8. Megan,—who are said to be the people mixed with the Garo and the Khasi.

other tribes and the peoples of the plain. Actually many of them 619
have spread into the plains lying outside the Garo Hills district.
Playfair mentions that the Chisak have a great deal in common with 184
the Awé, but they have certain distinctive features in dress and customs
which would seem to require that they be regarded as a separate 619
division. The Kachu are said to be scarcely distinguishable from the
Awé whom they resemble in almost all particulars of dress and custom.
Playfair notes that they comprised only seven villages, and were the
smallest group among the Garo.

The bulk of the population of the Garo is represented by groups 2 and 3 above. The Machi occupy the heart of the Garo Hills and are famous for their production of cotton, while the Abeng occupy the western slopes of the Hills where dry hill rice is the main product. The Atiagra is a small group, very much akin to the Abeng. The Matabeng are situated between the Abeng and the Machi. These two groups exhibit much in common in both culture and dialect and manifest the characteristics usually termed 'the Garo.'

Groups 4 and 5—the Gara-Ganching and the Atong—are somewhat
different from the preceding groups among the Garo. The Atong 197
especially have quite a different dialect from the other Garo and it is
generally said that their dialect is nearer to that of the people of 619
Coochi-Behar than to the other Garo dialects, for other Garo groups
hardly understand the speech of the Atong. However the latter are
bilingual so that they have no difficulty in conversing with their
neighbours. While the Atong are well known for their skill in making 184
boats, the Gara-Ganching are renowned for their craftsmanship in
sculpture and in the building of houses. The Gara-Ganching and the 619
Atong employ different house-building techniques.

The Chibak and the Ruga are small groups whose myths and general culture show considerable variations from those of other Garos, particularly the Chibak who have different forms of folk dances. The last group—the Dual—are according to Playfair, a colony of plain-dwellers who have their home in the district of Mymensing.

Each group exemplifies certain cultural differences and a certain
endogamous tendency which will be explained later, but they do not
necessarily form political units. The distinct differences that exist
are rather those that appear between the plain-dwellers of the first
group, the Awé and others, and the hill-dwellers who constitute the
remaining groups. The plain-dwellers are cultivators of wet rice [241]
fields, while most of the Garo population in the Hills practise shifting
cultivation. The Garo of the plains have become more sophisticated [771]
by closer contacts with the lowland peoples and many of them have
adopted Christianity. They seldom come into contact with the hill-
dwellers and live in an entirely different ecological and cultural environ-

184 ment from the latter. Thus the Garo may be divided roughly into
two main categories as hill-dwellers and plain-dwellers.

619 My field work was carried out among the hill-dwellers, who have
101 maintained a more indigenous culture; the villages of Rombagiri in
Machi, Siju in Atong, Emangiri in Gara-Ganching, and Rinsibara in
131 Abeng (see Map 2). The older villages of the Garo like Rombagiri,
Siju, and Emangiri are situated in the interior of the Hills along the
361 upper reaches of rivers. Their founders were always in search of
clean running water when they settled, so their villages are always
found near or on the bank of a river.[1]

241 As mentioned above, these Garo practise shifting cultivation,
generally known in Assam as 'jhum cultivation'. Their main products are cotton and hill rice. Their farming calendar is as follows: from December to January they cut down trees in a certain fixed area of jungle and leave them to dry till the end of March. In April, just before the first rainfalls, they set fire to the fallen trees; ashes remaining on the ground are washed into the soil by the rain, rendering the area very fertile. Soon after, they sow all kinds of seeds—paddy, cotton, chili, bean, millet, maize, pumpkins and gourds. They also plant various kinds of yam. These various kinds of crops are cultivated at haphazard in the same field. Paddy, cotton and chili, however, are comparatively well separated from other plants in certain sections of the fields. As many species are mixed in one field, the ripening times of the crops differ, extending from August to November; thus they can be harvested successively as they ripen. The jhum field is usually shifted every year, and the period of rotation is now one of several years. In some parts of the Hills, the jhum field is used for two successive years. It depends on the proportion between the village land and its population: the details of the use of a jhum field will be explained later.

178 These hill-dwellers have for centuries enjoyed a self-sufficient eco-
619 nomy, with plenty of rice and rice-beer. They wore loin-cloth, and,
in their bamboo houses, they slept near a fireplace, on a thin mattress
[513] made of bark. In the olden days, before the British period, the Garo
[287] Hills are very rarely mentioned in historical documents of either
[291] Bengal or Assam.

Since the British period, Tura has become the administrative centre and shortly after the Independence of India, the urbanisation of Tura, and the construction of roads from Goalpara to Tura, Tura to Dalu and further to Bagmala have brought great changes to the Garo Hills. Hindu culture and modern Christian education have gradually pene-

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[171] [1] They thus present quite an exceptional case, as the tribes in Assam and Himalaya generally establish their villages near the tops of the hills and far from rivers.

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trated into the hill-dweller's way of life. Educated Christian Garo [797]
leaders have been eager to bring civilization to their brethren. For
instance, they are trying their best to teach the Garos to wear clothes [291]
by purchasing cotton shirts from Hindu merchants. Nowadays a bare-breasted woman seldom happens to be met.

The increase in population in the last fifty years particularly led 178
the Garo to found new villages, and extend their settlements near 184
the plain. In this virgin field for cultivation between hill-dwellers
and plain-dwellers, the soil, in places like Rinsibara, is not good and 619
the forests are poorer than in the interior, so that the people adopted [161]
wet cultivation which, in such place, produced more yield than jhum- [361]
ing (see Chapter III). Thus hill-dwellers have come closer geograph- [243]
ically as well as economically to the plain peoples.

Hill-dwellers and plain-dwellers, no matter to what degree their sophistication may have proceeded nor the extent to which may have become differentiated as a result of their geographical and historical situation, have a strong tribal consciousness. As *Achik Mande* (people of Garo), all are Garo-speaking people and their social structure is uniform; hence they are very definitely marked off from neighbouring tribes and peoples.

## II. Distribution and Organization of Unilineal Groups

The principle of differentiation from neighbouring tribes and 616
peoples, and the principle of dynamic coherence in the Garo tribe, operate in the Garo social organization. The Garo are internally divided by a major cleavage into two exogamous matrilineal phratries, Sangma and Marak, which intermarry. These two groups which form a moiety structure are alleged to have different origins as illustrated by the events of their legends. At present there is a third group, Momin, which is an accreted clan, i.e. additional to moiety structure by historical process of marriage with foreign women.[1] The Momin may marry either a Sangma or a Marak, thus creating a dual complementary moiety system. However, it is a much smaller group and is found usually nearer the plain. In fact, in my census of three villages, members of Momin are very few, less than 0.5%. As a whole, in the phratry organization, the Momin play but a small part: in effect, empirically there is only a moiety relationship. In order to simplify my exposition of the Garo social organization I shall leave out this third group in the following discussion.

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[1] It is considered that the Momin have been recently created by the marriage between a Garo (Sangma or Marak) and a Mohammedan.

616 Every Garo individual belongs to either Sangma or Marak. When a Garo meets somebody on the way, he will ask whether he or she is Marak or Sangma. This moiety classification of clan is called *chatchi* by the natives. The *chatchi* is the most important indication of their social position among the Garo tribe. They can at once recognize the relation between *Ego* and anybody else, whether he or she is an ally or an enemy, and whether marriageable or not. Indeed, they are traditional enemies. At the same time, they are in a position of inescapable interdependence, since the Garo have a strict rule of exogamy at the level of *chatchi*.

614 These two *chatchi* are scattered all over the Garo area, being further segmented into various sub-groups, *mahari*. This distribution of *mahari* seems to have certain localized areas. For instance, *mahari* A, B and C of Sangma and *mahari* A′, B′ and C′ of Marak mostly occupied the eastern range of the Garo Hills, while D, E and F of Sangma and D′, E′ and F′ of Marak are mostly found along one of the rivers of the western area, and so on. Therefore, marriage relationship are usually to be found between *mahari* of Sangma and those of Marak which are localized in a particular area, not A of Sangma and D′ of Marak at random. Thus, they form a localized area. This socio-geographical area coincides to some extent with the differences in dialect and culture of the seven groups which I mentioned (see pp. 20-21). At least those areas I know of, show marked endogamous units with *mahari* distributions fairly corresponding with the cultural and geographical classification.

For instance, among the Atong the following *mahari* are to be found:

Ampang Sangma
Gineng Sangma
Mangsang Sangma
Richil Sangma
Ronchel Sangma

Dadok Marak
Gare Marak
Pantho Marak
Romtu Marak
Singtang Marak, etc.

These are only to be found among the Atong group along the lower banks of the Simsan River. Among the Machi, the following *mahari* are predominant:

Agitok Sangma
Tigiti Sangma
Manda Sangma

Chambugong Marak
Rangsa Marak

These *mahari* are also found among the Abeng as well as the Matabeng.[1] It may be said that the Machi, the Abeng and the Matabeng are not

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[1] It is beyond the limits of my investigation to present all the names of *mahari* of these groups like the Atong, since their areas are much wider and each of the *mahari* occupies a much larger territory than that of the other smaller groups. The list of all *mahari* of the Garo is given in Playfair, *ibid.*, Appendix A.

distinguishable as independent socio-cultural units like the Atong, but 614
form an endogamous unit and, as I have already stated, they are, moreover, quite similar in culture. In this case, classification by their group names would seem to have only geographical and ecological significance. Their legends record that in the course of their migration, one party remained in the central part of the Garo Hills to produce cotton, while another party proceeded to the west to specialize in hill rice cultivation. The former is known as Machi and the latter as Abeng.

In the Gara-Ganching area, which adjoins Atong in the east and Machi in the north, there are the following *mahari* groups situated around Emangiri:

Manda Sangma
Nenmanja Sangma
Meching Sangma
Mangsang Sangma
Mankin Sangma

Rima Marak
Rongmuto Marak
Areng Marak
Raksam Marak
Jichan Marak
Chada Marak

Among them, there may be found the same *mahari* with one of the Atong, as well as of the Machi. The distribution of *mahari* is not a clear-cut division in each group, but there appears a certain concentration of *mahari* which form an endogamous area.

Actually each group of *mahari* is again segmented into many 613
localized lineages. Therefore, structurally, the *mahari* plays a secon- 614
dary or intermediate role in the Garo tribal organization between *chatchi*, the primary organization of the phratry, and the tertiary or minor section of *mahari*—localized lineage. However, the native term *mahari* is used also to refer to the localized lineage. But in practice, the localized lineage is clearly indicated by adding its name to the *mahari* name. For instance, an individual sociological location is expressed as 'Chambugong Dinajik Sangma': Chambugong *(mahari)*, Dinajik (localized lineage), and Sangma *(chatchi)*. The broader category of *mahari* represents a sub-group of the *chatchi*, scattered in a considerably wider area. The members of this group often do not know each other, but as soon as they recognize that they belong to the same *mahari*, they behave as if they belonged to the same localized lineage.

For instance, during my field work, when I came to a village far 123
away from my interpreter's village, the villagers found my interpreter 574
was a member of the same *mahari* as them. Hence, they showed an 613
extremely affectionate attitude and he addressed them as *mama* 614
(mother's brother), though the kinship relation between the villagers
and him could not be traced at all and it was the first time they had [601]

123 met one another. In the course of discussion, they found names of
some common acquaintances, then as they were greatly satisfied with
574 this unexpected discovery of kinship, much more *chu* (rice-beer) was
613 poured into our glasses, and they talked with us intimately—there
614 was no doubt of that being of great help for my field work. Thus there
is a strong feeling of cohesion among the same *mahari* people. However,
it is not an organized system, but rather a feeling of closer lineage
relation. The actual organic body is established on the basis of a
localized group, a minor segment of the *mahari*.

613 The minor *mahari* group which I term 'localized lineage group'
is associated with the composition of a local community—a village
621 or usually a group of villages. The historical formation of a localized
lineage is as follows: once upon a time a couple founded a village far
away from their native village. The matrilineal descendants of this
couple differentiate themselves from other members of the same
*mahari*, by adding a local name. In the course of time, due to the
increase of its population, branch villages were formed around the
original. Therefore, a localized lineage often covers several neighbouring
villages, among which the parent village (the oldest one) holds a
direct matrilineal local line from the wife of the founder. In the
Garo Hills, each village is a political and economic unit which forms
an autonomous Garo tribal political organization. However, a group
of villages associated with a localized lineage has a closer tie and are
always considered as one sociological unit centered upon the parent
village, and distinguished from other nearby villages by their functional
coherence.

628 The membres of a village or a group of villages are thus united by
matrilineal kinship ties. Therefore, owing to their exogamous rule,
613 they must take spouses from one of the localized lineage groups of
614 one of the *mahari* of an opposite *chatchi* within a certain local area of
*mahari* distribution. It appears that there is a traditional contact
[621] between each localized lineage of Marak and of Sangma. Within a
certain endogamous geographical area which was observed previously
in the distribution of *mahari*, there are arrangements made between
each paired relation of localized lineage groups of Marak and of
Sangma. Therefore the actual marriage takes place on the basis of
localized lineages, not on that of *mahari* alone. In terms of my model,
and also in the people's mind, each pair of villages is composed of a pair
of opposed lineages forming a moiety arrangement with each other,
from which men are exchanged traditionally according to matrilineal
and uxorilocal rule. For instance, village A of *mahari* X of Sangma
and village B of *mahari* Y of Marak have a traditional moiety relationship
with each other. Village A consists of members of a localized
lineage of *mahari* X of Sangma with husbands of *mahari* Y of village B

614

and *vice versa*.[1] The villagers express this relationship as "village A 628
is the community of women of ***mahari*** X of Sangma and of men of 613
*mahari* Y of Marak," or "***a'king*** of ***mahari*** X and ***a'jiksa*** of ***mahari*** Y." The latter expression especially touches upon a very important characteristic of the Garo social structure in relation to their economic system.

*A'king* is the land owned by a village: every village has its land 423
which is cultivated by the villagers. This land is cultivated in rotation according to the method of jhum cultivation. The Garo who 621
practise jhum cultivation have no individual ownership of land but 613
each village household has its share in the village land. The common 614
ownership of land is vested in the headman's wife, who maintains 628
the direct local line of the founder of the village. This village land is called ***a'king***. The term ***a'jiksa*** means: the village and land belonging to it where husbands come from. So the ***a'king*** of village A is the ***a'jiksa*** of village B and ***vice versa***, since village A of Sangma and village B of Marak exchange menfolk in marriage. Through marriage rights, men of village A have rights of cultivation to the ***a'king*** of B and men of village B have the same to the ***a'king*** of A. This traditionally [581]
arranged social right (marriage right) based on an economic arrangement (land) is expressed in terms of ***a'kim***.[2]

Thus marriage relations are established between two opposite 61
lineages and are supported by the resulting economic balance. Every localized lineage finds its opposite localized lineage, and the two localized lineage groups form an inescapable interrelationship in their community. These relationships between pairs of opposite localized lineages are the nodal points of the whole net-work of Garo social organization. This localized lineage group emerges into broader ***mahari*** organization and again is linked to the widest range of kinship, ***chatchi***. These vertical unilineal lines across a moiety organization through exogamous marriages thus construct the Garo social organization which marks off the Garo from neighbouring tribes and peoples.

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[1] The actual village composition is somewhat different, see List 2, p. 42.

[2] This term: ***a'kim*** is used also for the expression of the right arised by a [592]
marriage bond between two households *(nok)*. Such relationship between the two household is theoretically not divorced from the relationship between two villages (localized lineages) as it will become clearer in the course of discussion.

The marriage arrangement between two particular villages is an expression of the ideal pattern. The actual state is much more complicated, as I shall explain later. Owing especially to the recent increase and mobility of the village [178]
population, the concept of ***a'kim*** is getting out of use nowadays. The Garos of the villages I visited would talk to me in the following manner: "Village X was the ***a'jiksa*** of ours, but nowadays we no more call Village X our ***a'jiksa***."

[p. 28 is blank.]

## CHAPTER II

# THE RELATION OF VILLAGE COMMUNITY TO KINSHIP STRUCTURE

In this chapter, I shall consider Rombagiri village in some detail, 128
as a basis for a general description of the characteristics of Garo 121
village communities. Rombagiri, one of the oldest parent villages in the interior part of the Garo Hills, provides ample *data* for the discussion. For comparative and supplemental purposes, however, I shall also employ *data* on two other villages, Emangiri and Siju. The structural principles derived from the analysis of the workings of Rombagiri community, offer lights for the understanding of various guises of other Garo village communities, including those affected by rapid changes owing to the recent development of the Hills along with the construction of motor roads.

## I. ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND

Rombagiri is situated on the bank of the upper course of the 133
Simsang River, the largest river in the Garo Hills; its source is in 361
Mt. Nokrek and it flows through the heart of the Garo Hills towards
the eastern border where it turns southwards to East Pakistan. Many [131]
of the older Garo villages are found along this river. The Simsang cuts a deep gorge at Rombagiri between the Arbela and the Nokrek ranges. The village is situated on the southern slope where the ridge falls down very steeply to the river, and faces northwards to the Nokrek range across the river.

The Rombagiri *a'king* (village land) encompasses vast slopes of 423
mountains on both sides of the river, centred on the village site (see 621
Map 3). Around the village site, a certain area of jungle is marked
as village land, differentiated from other village lands by clear border 361
lines (stones are placed at every corner). The *a'king* is subdivided into [241]
several sections which correspond to the rotation of jhum cultivation,

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 31]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

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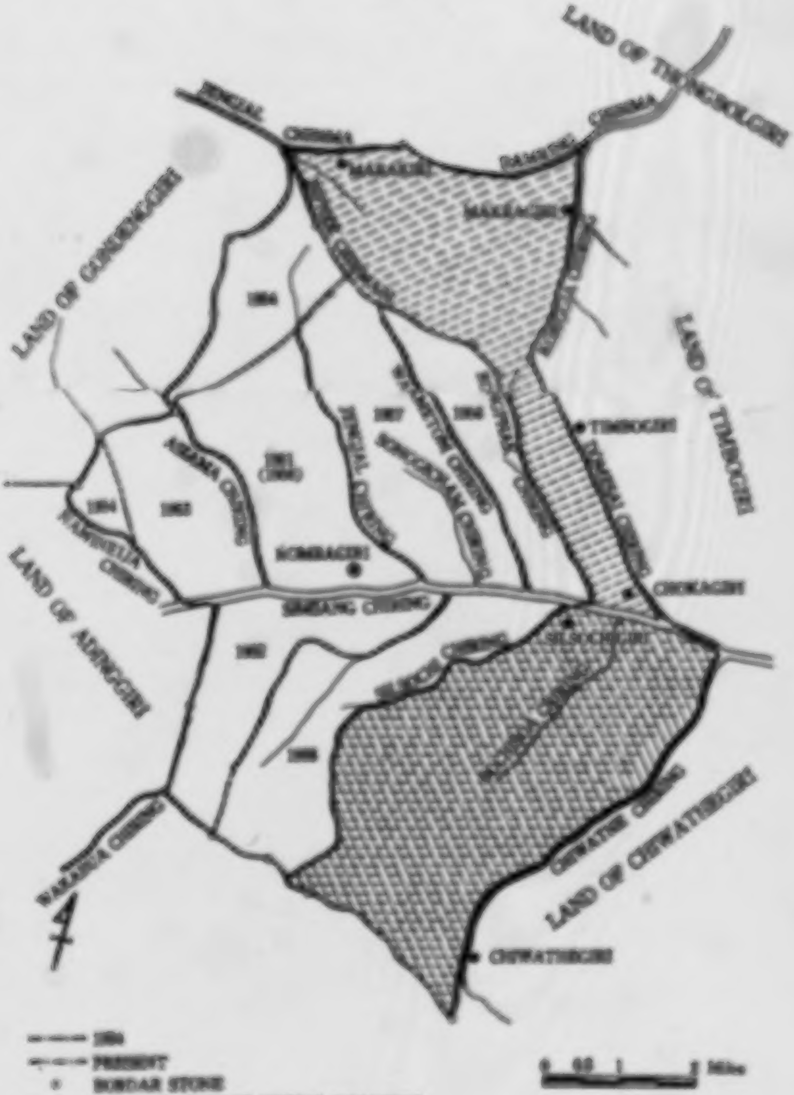
LAND OF GUNDUNGGIRI
LAND OF TIMROGIRI
LAND OF ADINGGIRI
LAND OF CHIWATHIRGIRI
JENGJAL CHINNA
SIMSANG CHIRING
ROMBAGIRI
TIMROGIRI
CHOKAGIRI
CHIWATHIRGIRI
1954
1955
PRESENT
BORDAR STONE
MARKING LINES OF ANNUAL ROTATION
0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Map 3. — *Village Land of Rombagiri.*

361

involving annual changes of cropping and a return to the same part 423
of the field after several years: the rotation in Rombagiri is every
seven years. Each area of the *a'king* under cultivation is further sub- 621
divided into many small fields which are apportioned to each household [241]
of the village (see Map 4). About this economic organization of the [592]
village further details will be presented later.

The management of the *a'king* is in the hands of the *nokma* (headman) 423
who acts in cooperation with the villagers. The *nokma* as a rule 592

621
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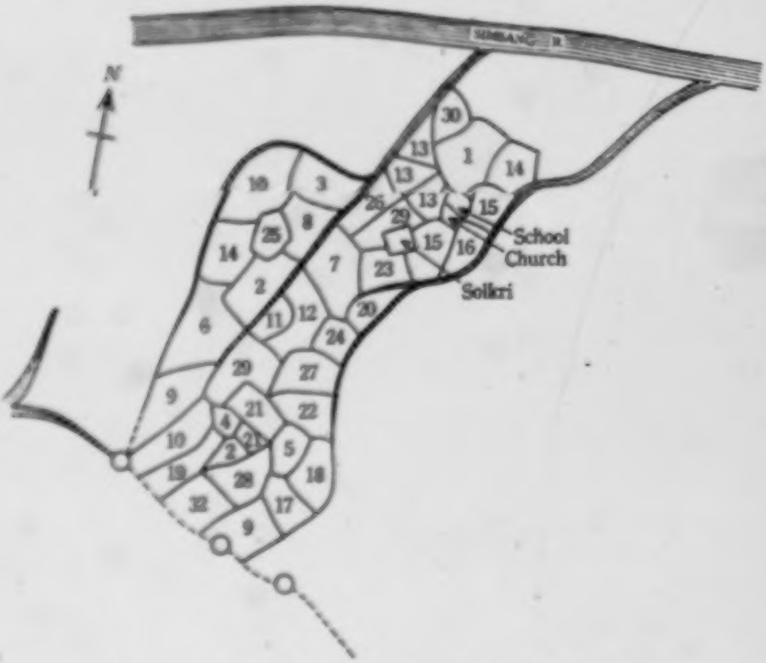
[102]
[241]
[3'0'1]



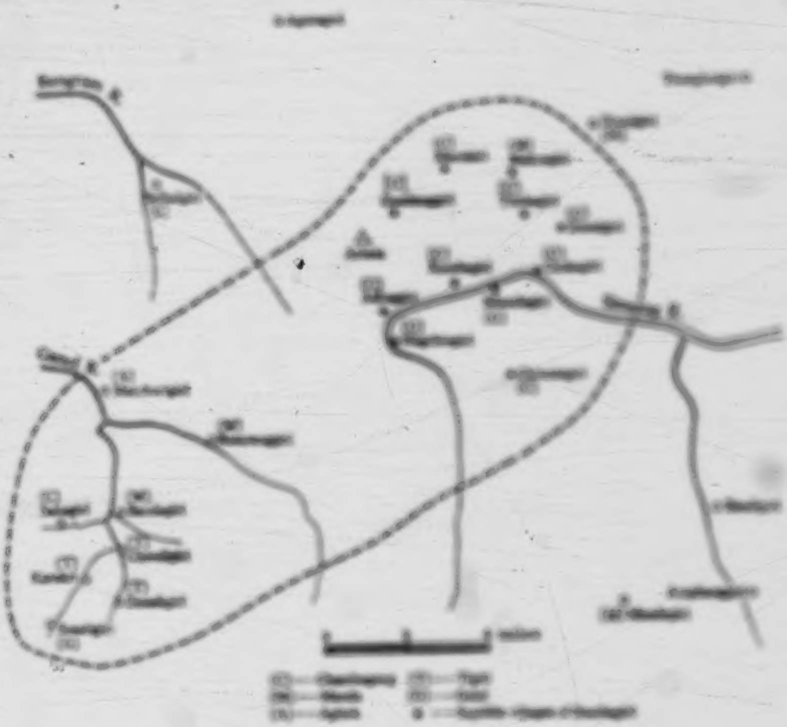
MAP 4. — *Distribution of Jhum Field for Each Household of Rombagiri in 1955.*

The portion named 'Solkri' is kept for the village ceremonies, cultivated by non-Christian villagers in turn. Likewise the portions of Church and of School are cultivated by Christian villagers, products of which are meant for Christian festivals.

cannot sell or lease this land, nor are the villagers required to pay
any tax either in cash or in kind to the *nokma*. All the products of
each field belong to the members of the household which cultivate it. 361
Should the number of households increase, a new village is established 423
on another section of the parent village *a'king*, convenient to the
621

361 cultivation: some households of the village move away from the village
423 site, but the new settlements are found somewhere inside the *a'king*.
621 Finally a part of the *a'king* around the new settlement becomes an
[622] independent unit separated from the original one. They again find it necessary to establish a new nokma, as they form an independent

[102]
[103]



Map 5. — *The Area including Rombagiri under the Same Nokma*

body of economic management. Thus branch villages are formed around the parent village in the course of time. In the case of the Rombagiri group, there are several branch villages situated around the parent village, their distribution is shown on Map 5.

173 Rombagiri is possibly one of the oldest villages in the Garo Hills.
103 According to the legend of the foundation of the village once upon a time there was a man named Baigo who, accompanied by his wife, Gutingma, and his son, Romba, came in search of a fertile land to the site of the present village of Rombagiri, then covered with thick jungle. Soon after their arrival, their beloved son, Romba, was taken

by a tiger. In his memory, they named the place "Rombagiri." The village was found by Balgo Agitok Sangma and his wife, Gotingma Chambugong Marak. How old is Rombagiri? As far as people's memory goes through the names of successive generations of nokmas, the present nokma is the 16th; the details are as follows:

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173
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| Name of nokma | Chatchi | Machong | Local lineage | Name of wife | Chatchi | Machong | Local lineage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. [illegible] | Sangma | Agitok | [illegible] | [illegible] | Marak | Chambugong | [illegible] |
| 2. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 3. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 4. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 5. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 6. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 7. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 8. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 9. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 10. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 11. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 12. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 13. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 14. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 15. [illegible] | — | — | — | [illegible] | — | — | — |
| 16. [illegible] | — | — | — | — | — | — | — |

It is considered that in early times the land of Rombagiri extended over a much wider area of southern Achik, including the southern bank of the Simsang River, which covers all 4 of the present branch villages. According to the people's accounts, it seems that the branching outwards took place during the last hundred years. In former times, there were constant fightings between villages of neighbouring lineage groups belonging to opposite chatchi and for purposes of military security, they found it necessary to settle together. According to numerous accounts, the Garo villages of the interior used to comprise more than a hundred households, though at present the usual number within a village ranges between 30 and 50. When the village were created under British administration, as indeed they did in many cases amongst the various tribes in India, satellite villages soon began to shape from a resulting increase of population as well as the need for a more efficient cultivation of the jhum fields. In a village of more than a hundred households, the distribution of jhum fields amongst the households becomes extremely complicated, since every year, when the field is shifted, each must be allocated its share. Another disadvantage was that due to the rotation of fields, in some years the field was situated very far from the village site—indeed they used to build temporary houses near the field for the period of the cultivation.

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[61]
[628]

[161]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

361 The establishment of branch villages within the original *a'king* therefore enabled them to simplify the annual distribution of fields to each household as well as to each settlement situated close to the land to be cultivated. As I stated before, a group of settlements separated from the older village formed a new village, a political and economic unit, and created a new *nokma*, though they still remained part of their original social unit on the level of the localized lineage group.

In the course of time, some of these branch-villages further subdivided and created new secondary branch-villages. At present Rombagiri has altogether ten satellite villages: Gondenggiri, Adinggiri, Nagchingiri (sub-branch-village of Adinggiri), Timbogiri, Donsigiri (sub-branch-village of Timbogiri), Chiwathegiri, Makragiri, Marakiri, Chokagiri and Silsechigiri. It is very difficult to reconstruct in full the branching-off process of these ten villages from the original Rombagiri. What we do know is that in 1924, the *a'king* of Rombagiri included the area which is bounded by: —·— in Map 3, since the record made by the then Deputy Commissioner, G. D. Walker, marks the area as Rombagiri. It is understood throughout this record that by 1924 amongst the satellite villages, Gondenggiri, Adinggiri, Timbogiri and Chiwathegiri had already dissociated their land from Rombagiri. The southeastern part of the Simsang River was taken from Rombagiri at the foundation of Silsechigiri in 1936. This was the last formed of the satellite villages. The northeastern part of the Simsang River was taken by Marakiri, Makragiri[1] and Chokagiri, but there are no records relating to their breaking away from Rombagiri. We can only place it sometime between 1924 and 1936. I was also unable to obtain the date of the formation of the secondary branch-villages, i.e. Nagchingiri from Adinggiri and Donsigiri from Timbogiri.

361 At the establishment of Silsechigiri, a report was compiled by the
623 then British Deputy Commissioner. This report gives us valuable
622 information about the branching-off process. According to the report,
648 Gilbong *nokma* (1478), was in debt to the extent of Rs. 400 and 2 bulls
692 to Gowan Marak and Baram Marak of his village. On January 1928
686 the section of that land which is marked as Silsechigiri in Map 3 was given to Gowan Marak and Baram Marak in payment of the debt. Now Gowan and Baram wanted it as a separate *a'king*, but the Chambugong *nokma* objected and offered instead to repay the original debt in order to take back the land. Gowan and Baram were unwilling to do this. The case was brought before the Deputy Commissioner's Court. The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. W. Shaw, granted Gowan and Baram this land as a separate *a'king* and called it Silsechigiri in February 1936.

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[1] The *a'king* of Makragiri became later in the possession of [illegible] *nokma* (see p. [illegible]).

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

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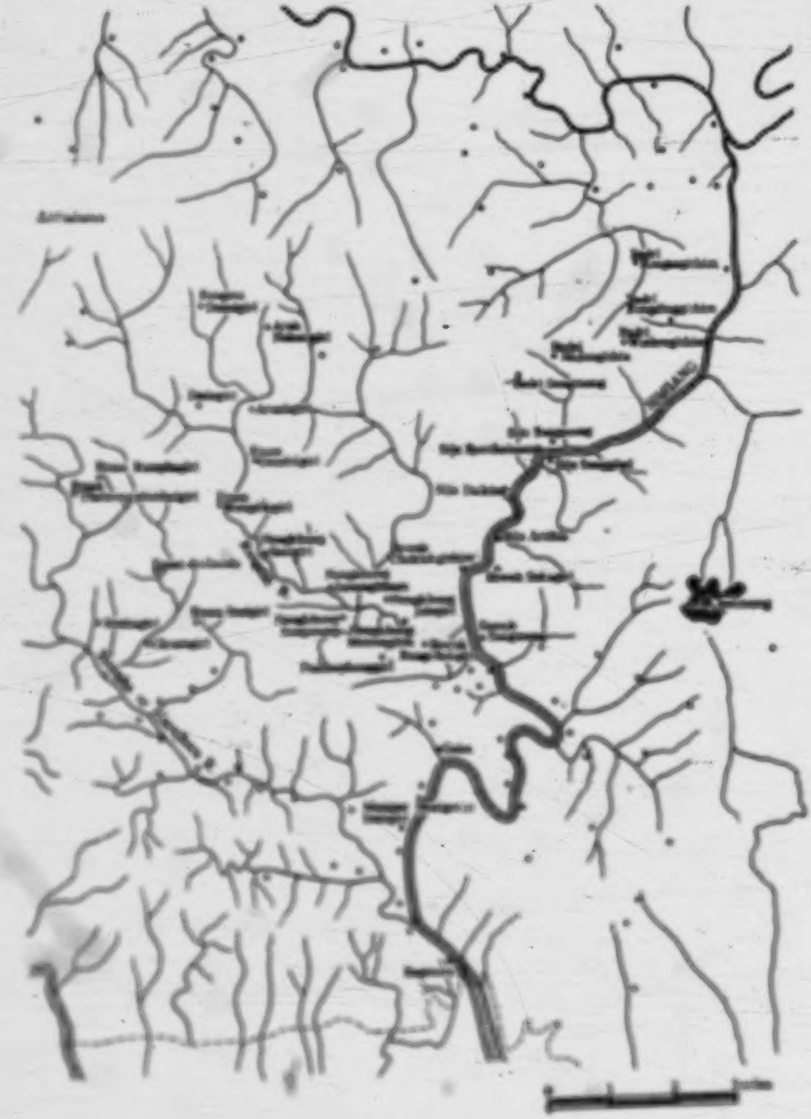

MAP 6. — *Distribution of Villages in Atong and Garo-Ganching Area*

361 423 622 661 As a rule, the *a'king* is village land and no one can hold any part of it as private land. However such cases do occur when the *nokma* or any other rich person becomes very powerful and uses the *a'king* as if it were private land to sell, buy or mortgage. The above case is not an exceptional one. Such abuses of the power of the *nokma* and illegal activities of rich and powerful men have made considerable changes in the traditional distribution of *a'king* in the Garo Hills. The present *a'king* of Dinagigiri and Makragiri, both of which are in the possession of the Manda *mahari*, were taken from the *a'king* of Waimagiri (another neighbouring Chambugong village) and of Rombagiri two generations back. I found similar instances of distribution of *a'king* also among the Emangiri group and the Siju group—the branching-off of villages was nearly always accompanied by stories of influential men who effected the present distribution of the *a'king*. Thus in spite of the moral tradition that the *a'king* belongs primarily to a village, the actual state of distribution shows a more fluid character. [721] [178] Before the British occupation the distribution of the *a'king* was decided by local wars, but under the Pax Britannica, the individual intrigues and the judicial decisions of the British administration were the more influencial factors.

361 In the Atong and the Gara-Ganching areas, the distribution of satellite villages can be easily recognized through the names of villages and their locations alone (see Map 6). Along the Simsang River and its tributary, the Rongdik, there are many satellite village groups such as the following:

| *Parent village* | *Satellite villages* |
|---|---|
| Badri Songmong ............ | Badri Malongithim |
| | Badri Wathregithim |
| | Badri Rongdinggithim |
| | Badri Rongsagithim |
| Siju Songmon ............... (Siju) | Siju Songgital |
| | Siju Ronthainam |
| | Siju Daikim |
| | Siju Artika |
| Rewak Songmon ............ | Rewak Sakagiri |
| | Rewak Choklokgithim |
| | Rewak Rongchekgiri |
| Nengkhong Songmong ...... | Nengkhong Matmagitik |
| | Nengkhong Jolagiri |
| | Nengkhong Jeramgitham |
| | Nengkhong Seelgiri |
| Eman Rongdikgiri ........... (Emangiri) | Eman Gatabilgiri |
| | Eman Romphagiri |
| | Eman Thebrongphathalgiri |
| | Eman Drabanda |
| | Eman Seelgiri |

Politically and economically each village, headed by the *nokma* and 621
his wife, forms a unit. However, the satellite villages and the parent
village form a social and political concentration whose cohesion is 622
the theoretical basis of the localized lineage group and the result of 628
earlier political and military unity.

Through the lineage organization with its historical background, 613
the eleven villages, comprising Rombagiri and its satellites, form a 614
single unit headed by the former and united against neighbouring village groups. Wives of the *nokma* of the ten satellite villages are closely related to the wife of the *nokma* of Rombagiri, thus forming the localized lineage group of Chambugong Dinajik. Likewise, the *nokma* of the eleven villages are, as a rule, men of the opposite lineage group, that is Agitok Khoksep Sangma. (Makragiri is the exception since its *a'king* became of Manda.) Their traditional enemies were the adjacent villages of Sangma, Chondigiri, whose *mahari* is Tigiti Sangma (Karakiri and Dinadigiri are its satellite villages) and Mandagiri whose *mahari* is Manda Sangma (see Map 5). The *mahari* of Sangma had always been the enemy of the *mahari* of Marak. The exception is the opposite lineage group with whom they exchange their menfolk. For instance, Dimitigiri (Agitok Sangma) had always been the *a'jikia* of the Rombagiri people, never the enemies.

The distribution of a certain group of the *mahari* of Sangma and 613
of Marak is traditionally associated with a particular locality, as in
the case of the Rombagiri area: east and south of the Rombagiri 628
group there is the Manda Sangma and to the west, Tigiti Sangma; 614
to the north, Chambugong Marak and so on (see Map 5). Accordingly 621
Siju, the *a'king* of the Ampan Sangma, is surrounded by Richil Sangma, Romchel Sangma and Singtang Marak. Around Emangiri, the *a'king* of the Rima Marak, whose *nokma* is Manda Sangma, there are the Manda Sangma, Aren Marak, Rongmutu Marak, etc. Thus the areas of the *mahari* of Sangma and of the *mahari* of Marak cut across each other with traditional enemies on the one hand, and intermarriage relations on the other. This particular area where either an enemy relationship or a marriage relationship exists forms an endogamous unit, because both relationships rarely extend beyond the traditional area. This area corresponds with what I already mentioned on pages 20-21. In this fairly clearly defined area, both the *mahari* of Marak of and Sangma are distributed and amongst them, at the level of localized lineages, they form the moiety relationship with one another, cutting across the area in various ways. Each localized lineage group, as a village or a village group, maintains a hostile relationship on one hand and marriage connections on the other. Thus all villages within such an area are linked directly or indirectly either by cognatic ties or by affinal ties which tend to bridge cleavages where hostile relationships exist.

61 621 Each socio-geographical area on the level of the *mahari* is united by the higher cognatic relationship of the *chatchi*, which merges into the wider constellation of tribal organization. This is the Garo socio-political structure. The Garo have no centralized political office or social ranking system in their organization; there is only the unit existing through the cohesion of the lineage group, which, though it might be fragmented into smaller political economic units, maintains, nevertheless, a balance of power through its functional organization based on exogamous rule. This system might be called a democratic type, as I have concluded in an earlier paper (Nakane, 1958/A).

177 634 648 On the basis of the traditional Garo political organization which is so clearly associated with their social structure, the British administration created a new political office, the *loskor*. The Garo Hills were divided into new geographical and political divisions wherein as many as a dozen villages or more became one unit, the head of which was called the *loskor*. He was elected among the *nokma* of this unit by the *nokma* themselves. The unit of the *loskor* around Rombagiri is shown on Map 5. In 1949 the Garo Autonomous District was formed and is known as the District of the Garo Hills, one of the districts under the Assam Government. By this administrative change, the *loskor* organization was still maintained, but alongside it they now appoint a *sordar* in each village to assist the *loskor*. The *sordar* are appointed by an autonomous body known as the Council of the Garo Hills, which supervises all the villages. These political changes have much affected the traditional socio-political system centred upon the *nokma*. To this theme, I shall return later.

## II. SETTING AND COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION OF ROMBAGIRI

621 36 Rombagiri village was a community consisting, in December 1955, of 30 households, the majority of which were *songsarek* (non-Christian); one-third of the population had adopted Christianity. The houses of the *songsarek* stood in three crescents along the slope of the northern bank of the Simsang River (see Map 7). The first line, which formed the outer circle of the village, faced the *nokpante* (bachelors' dormitory). The uppermost corner was occupied by a group of Christians' houses, with a Church and a school. The cluster of houses was in turn surrounded by the *jam* (store-houses for paddy) of each house, circling the village from north to east. Usually these *jam* are full of paddy, as Rombagiri possesses one of the most fertile jhum fields in the
621 Garo Hills. The people of Rombagiri fish and bathe in the Simsang
[312] River, cooking water being available from the stream which flows

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 40]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

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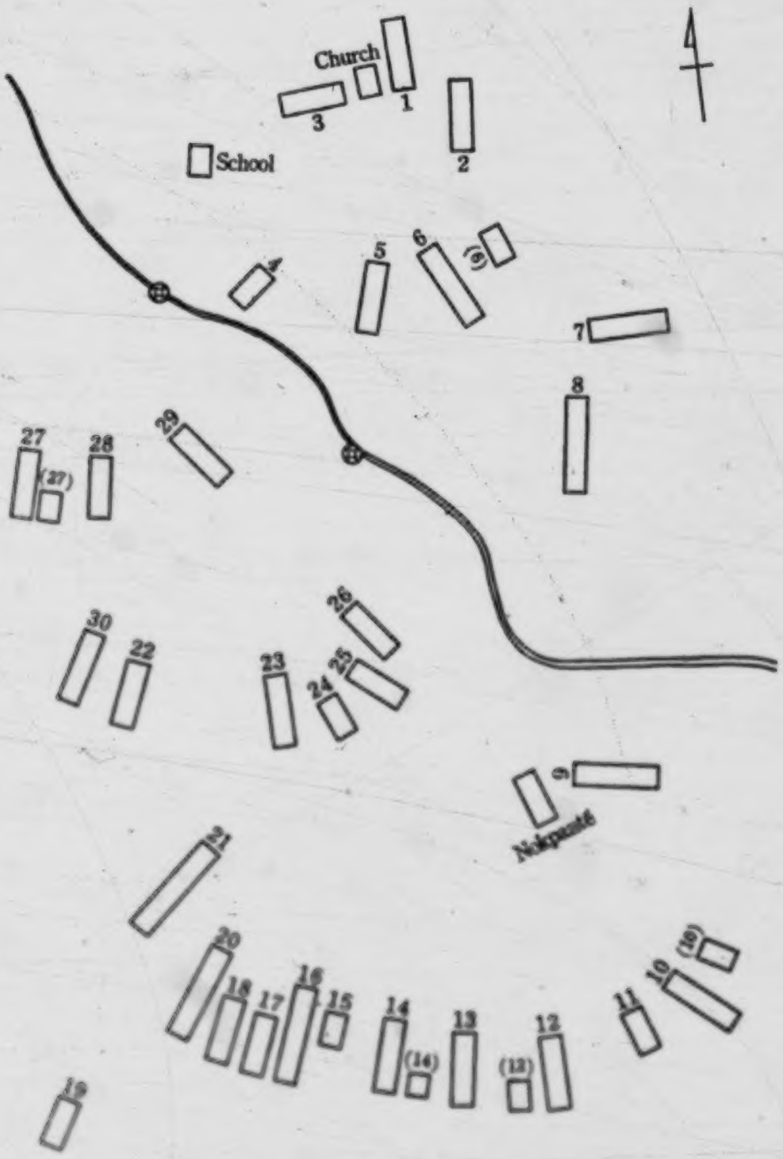
Church
1
2
3
School
4
5
6
(6)
7
8
29
27
(27)
28
26
30
22
23
25
24
9
Nokpanté
21
20
18
17
16
15
14
(14)
13
(12)
12
11
10
(10)
19

*Map. 7. — Distribution of the Houses of Rombagiri.*

621 through the village. Richer households possess several cows, ordinary
[312] households a few pigs and several chickens.

[231] The houses are made of bamboo and timber. The Garo houses
are the most impressive among those of the tribes in Assam. They
342 have a frontage of about 4-5 meters and a length of about 15-30 meters
—the longer the length, the more prosperous the household. Usually they are built on the slope, the entrance is on a level with the ground and the house is built backwards with long beams of timber; thus the flooring of the living-rooms is raised as much as three meters above the ground (See Plate A & B). A typical Garo house plan is shown on Fig. 1.

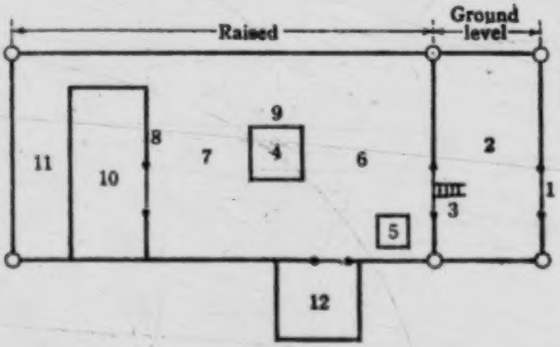

FIG. 1. — *Ground Plan of a Typical Garo House.*

1. Entrance.
2. Ground floor for keeping cattles at night.
3. Entrance ladder.
4. Central hearth for receiving guests and drinking, etc. (mainly for men).
5. Cooking hearth (mainly for women).
6. Women's place.
7. Men's place.
8. Seat of the household head.
9. Seat for guests.
10. Store room.
11. Covered verandah for the use of latrine at night.
12. Open verandah keeping water pots, etc.

[231] Inside, the house is divided into three main sections. The first room
from the entrance is used for sheltering cattle at night; then there is
[354] a large hall, in the centre of which is a square fire-place. The women usually cook at another fire-place situated near the first section and that part of the hall adjacent to the first section is the place reserved for the women. The central fire-place in the hall is kept for the men who sit there to talk, drink rice-beer and eat. This is the centre and the most important room of the Garo house. At the back of

this room there is a small room with a small entrance for storing all sorts of property. From the right side to the back of this small room there is a sort of corridor, the back of which is used as a latrine at night because of the fear of wild animals. 342 [514]

Each household, called *nok* by the natives, is occupied usually by the members of an elementary family, including the wife's unmarried siblings and her widowed mother according to the cycle of the domestic family. When it grows, it includes the heiress' husband and her children. But as long as the heiress' parents are alive, a small hut is built for the heiress and her husband, adjacent to the main house. The couple lives in this hut until the head of the main family dies. (See Map 7; (12) and (14) are such cases). However, this kind of hut forms a domestic and economic unit together with the main house. The head of the *nok* (domestic unit) is the husband, and the owner of its property is the wife; both represent the members of the *nok*. The following list shows the names of husbands (household heads) and wives of all the *nok* of Rombagiri by *mahari*. 592 551 614 621

List 1. *The Household Heads and their Wives of Rombagiri.*
*(Numbers correspond to that of Map 7.)*

| | *Husband* | *Mahari* | *Wife* | *Mahari* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Chambat S. | Agitok Khoksep | Kalji M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 2. | Chajan S. | — — | Pajing M. | — — |
| 3. | Sangwan M. | Ch. Dinajik | Segmi S. | Agitok Khoksep |
| 4. | Gonsing M. | — — | Nanakmi S. | — — |
| 5. | Wuilgan S. | Tigiti | Kancho M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 6. | Kilwang S. | Agitok Khoksep | Mijang M. | — — |
| 7. | Singan S. | — — | Nobang M. | Ch. Macho |
| 8. | Naban S. | — — | Wiljing M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 9. | Rintang S. | — — | Wantek M. | — — |
| 10. | Raising S. | Manda Pakran | Kansi M. | — — |
| 11. | Dinaram M. | Ch. Dinajik | Banchak M. | Rangsa |
| 12. | Kiljan S. | Manda Rombok | Mishing M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 13. | Janggan M. | Ch. Dinajik | Parbat S. | Manda Rombok |
| 14. | Sinchang S. | Manda Rombok | Jangri M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 15. | Airam S. | Tigiti | Milmi M. | — — |
| 16. | Jingban S. | Agitok Dragiri | Jaji M. | — — |
| 17. | Jiwan S. | Agitok Khoksep | Sinchok M. | Ch. Anil |
| 18. | Songgan S. | — — | Janjak M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 19. | Palan M. | Ch. Anil | Kummi S. | Manda Akabanda |
| 20. | Mingria S. | Agitok Machu | Gonjak M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 21. | Jia S. | Agitok Khoksep | Tijap M. | — — |
| 22. | Singrin M. | Ch. Dinajik | Gonji S. | Manda Rombok |
| 23. | Oren S. | Manda Rombok | Armin M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 24. | Kimjang M. | Ch. Dinajik | Ganni S. | Agitok Khoksep |
| 25. | Changjan S. | Agitok Khoksep | Ganji M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 26. | Simba M. | Ch. Dinajik | Ramjin S. | Manda Rombok |

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621

| | *Husband* | *Mahari* | *Wife* | *Mahari* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 27. | Changding S. | Tigiti | Barti M. | Ch. Dinajik |
| 28. | Wiuilwan M. | Ch. Dinajik | Dinding S. | Tigiti |
| 29. | Sesing Momin | Gabil | Simjin S. | Agitok Khoksep |
| 30. | Goren S. | Agitok Khoksep | Sujak M. | Ch. Dinajik |

*Note:* M. = Marak, S. = Sangma, Ch. = Chambugong.
1 - 8 and 18 are Christians.

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621

List 2. *Numbers by* mahari *of Individuals named in List 1.*

| *Mahari* | *Husbands* | *Wives* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Chambugong Dinajik | 8 | 18 |
| 2. Agitok Khoksep | 11 | 4 |
| 3. Manda Rombok | 3 | 3 |
| 4. Tigiti | 3 | 1 |
| 5. Chambugong Macho | 0 | 1 |
| 6. Chambugong Anil | 1 | 1 |
| 7. Agitok Dragiri | 1 | 0 |
| 8. Agitok Machu | 1 | 0 |
| 9. Mand Pakran | 1 | 0 |
| 10. Manda Akabanda | 0 | 1 |
| 11. Ransa | 0 | 1 |
| 12. Gabil | 1 | 0 |
| Total | 30 | 30 |

621
61
[622]

Traditionally, Rombagiri is the village of Chambugong Dinajik; its *nokma's* wife is always a woman of Chambugong Dinajik (see p. 33) and its *a'kng* belongs to the same *mahari*. The *nokma* should always be a man of Agitok Khoksep of the Dimitigiri village group; husbands of the women likewise are men of the same lineage as the *nokma*. Rombagiri is the *a'jiksa* of Dimitigiri and *vice versa*. What I have explained in the previous chapter about the moiety arrangement between the two particular localized lineage groups of Sangma and of Marak is the ideal and fundamental force underlying the Garo social structure. However, the actual village community does not necessarily include only households of the same lineage groups. As appeared in the actual composition of Rombagiri, wives belong to seven different lineage groups besides the traditional lineage of Rombagiri, Chambugong Dinajik. Husbands also originate from eight different lineage groups besides Agitok Khoksep. However, these different lineages are minor ones and are comparative new-comers to Rombagiri except Chambugong Dinajik in the case of husbands and Agitok Khoksep in the case of the wives. In fact, those of *mahari* 5-12

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

in List 2 came to Rombagiri during the last twenty years; their spouses 621
are found among *mahari* 1-4. In spite of the accumulation of these
new lineages, the majority of wives belong to Chambugong Dinajik 61
and the husbands to Agitok Khoksep.

In order to simplify my demonstration I shall leave temporarily aside the elements of the new lineages and explain the fundamental workings of Chambugong Dinajik and Agitok Khoksep, which is the intrinsic constituent element of the whole organization of Rombagiri. The traditional moiety arrangement between the two local lineage groups, which are represented by Rombagiri and Dimitigiri, is based on the function of the cross-cousin marriage.

## III. The Principles of Garo Cross-cousin Marriage and its Functional Importance

Theoretically Garo marriages are arranged between two localized 582
lineage groups as we have seen, such as Chambugong Dinajik (Rombagiri group) and Agitok Khoksep (Dimitigiri group) by exchanging menfolk. As a result every member has his or her spouse as a cross-cousin (actual or classificatory). On this level, both types of cross-cousin marriage, matrilateral and patrilateral, are practised. It is *the symetrical cross-cousin marriage arrangement on the basis of localized lineage groups*.

This system is manifested in the extremely simple scheme of Garo 582
kinship terminology. Its major framework is what is called Iroquois 601
type. Clear lineal differentiations appear within three generations centred on *Ego*, with distinction of sex. The kinship terminology of each of these three generations clearly divides both cognates and affines into two categories: category A indicates the members of *Ego*'s matrilineal group, and category B the members of the opposite group; the
former is non-marriageable and the latter is marriageable. Fig. 2 601
illustrates the kinship system by means of the genealogical diagram,

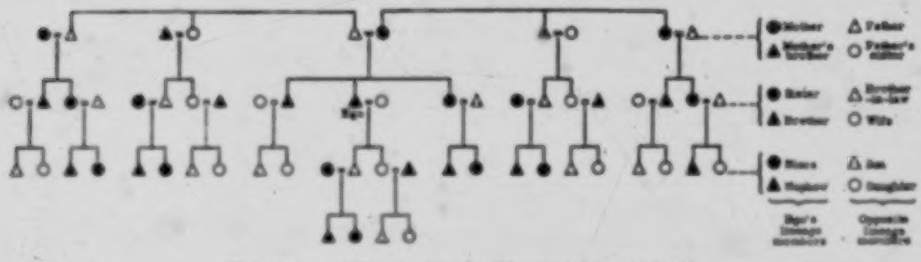

Fig. 2. — *Scheme of Garo Kinship Terminology.*

601 and the following table classifies categories of relatives according to native terms.

*Garo kinship terms used by the male Ego:*[1]

A = Ego's matrilineal group; B = the opposite group;
F = female; M = male; (E) = elder; (Y) = younger.

*First ascending generation:*

A – F *ama:* mother.
*majong* (E), *madé* (Y): mother's sister, father's brother's wife, wife's father's sister.
A – M *mama:* mother's brother, father's sister's husband, wife's father, wife's father's brother.
B – M *apa:* father.
*pajong* (E), *awang* (Y): father's brother, mother's sister's husband.
B – F *mani:* father's sister, mother's brother's wife.

*Ego's generation:*

A – F *abi* (E), *no* (Y): sister, father's brother's daughter, mother's sister's daughter.
A – M *ada* (E), *jong* (Y): brother, father's brother's son, mother's sister's son.
B – F *jik:* wife, brother's wife, father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's daughter.
B – M *boning:* father's sister's son, mother's brother's son, sister's husband.

*First descending generation:*

A – F *namchik:* sister's daughter, wife's brother's daughter, father's sister's son's daughter, mother's brother's son's daughter, son's wife, wife's brother's wife.
A – M *gri:* sister's son, wife's brother's son, father's sister's son's son, mother's brother's son's son.
B – F *demichik:* daughter, brother's daughter, wife's sister's daughter, father's sister's daughter's daughter, mother's brother's son's daughter.
B – M *dipanté:* son, brother's son, wife's sister's son, father's sister's daughter's son, mother's brother's son's son.

*The following terms indicate affinal relations to Ego:*

A – M *obité:* wife's father, wife's father's brother, wife's sister's husband (he is also called *sadi*).
*chawari:* daughter's husband (*nokrom* is used for the particular *chawari* who married the heiress).
B – F *nio:* wife's mother, wife's mother's sister.
B – M *mosa:* wife's mother's brother, wife's brother.

601
602 These terms are used for a set of people with whom *Ego* has close social ties: members of his own native village as well as of his wife's village, and members of other villages with whom he and his close kin

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[1] For further detailed information concerning Garo kinship terminology, see R. Burling, 1956, and 1963 (Appendix e).

have kinship relations. This set of relatives consists of a fairly 601
wide circle of bilateral kins and includes certain affinal members. 602
In fact the feeling of the Garo towards these relatives, whether lineage members or not, is very intimate, and discrimination between *Ego*'s own lineage people and others is not as great as we observe in other unilineal systems. This is because of the moiety structure, which allows lineage members and non-lineage members (affines) almost the same importance in relation to *Ego*. In this structure, the descent group solidarity is naturally minimized. For instance, the actual genealogical relation between *Ego* and the members of *Ego*'s own local lineage, whom *Ego* addresses by appropriate kinship terms, often cannot be clearly established. For the Garo actual genealogical links have no vital importance. For example, *Ego*'s relation to his wife's sister's husband (who belongs to the category of 'brother' since he is an *Ego*'s lineage member according to the moiety arrangement) is recognized through affinal lateral relation (they term this relation *saditan*), but the genealogical link between the two men is not always expressed, unless they are closely related, first cousins for instance. This is why the terms which indicate affinal relations are more developed, more frequently used than cognatie kinship terms among the Garo. This usage tends to ignore actual genealogical links among the members of the same lineage beyond a domestic scale. In fact I had great difficulty in compiling the actual genealogical relations of all inhabitants of the village, as beyond the grand mother's generation people's memory became very poor.

This also stands in close relation to the kinship system, the distinct lineal terminology of which is only found within three generations centred on *Ego*. For the grandparents' and the grandchildren's generation, the same terms are used for both paternal and maternal sides. Grandmothers of both sides are called *ambi*, likewise, grandfathers are *achu*; the grandchildren of both sides are *angsu*, though the additional distinctive terms *chongka* (true) and *jakasi* (secondary) are added.

It is clear that the Garo are organized into two unilineal categories 61
within a clear sociological field—a certain range of unilineal groups *(mahari)* associated with a certain endogamous locality, and not into a system of descent groups of segmentary lineage. In a segmentary system, the members of a lineage are recognized through genealogical links. If the lineage is only used in terms of descent group, whose members can trace genealogical relation to each other, the Garo unilineal group in terms of localized segmentation (sub-*mahari*) which I term 'localized lineage' is not a lineage in the strict sense. Nevertheless I did use this term because, although members can not always trace genealogical links, their conceptual framework makes them out to be the descendants of a common ancestress who once established the

61 local lineage together with the founding of a village, thus distinguishing
themselves from other members of the same *mahari*. In the course
of time when its members increased, spreading over more than a
dozen villages, actual genealogical links tended to be forgotten, since
the moiety structure which provides clearly defined categories, does
not require the keeping of actual genealogies. Attention should be
drawn here to this structural difference between Garo 'localized lineage'
—lineage with incomplete genealogical evalidation—and the lineage
of the segmentary system.

582 The scheme of Garo kinship terminology fits perfectly into the
framework of cross-cousin marriage which has been described. Both
601 mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's daughter stand in
61 the same category as the potential wife in relation to *Ego*, in which
both matrilateral and patrilateral cross-cousin marriages are expected.
Indeed many cases of both kinds of cross-cousin marriages are found
in my census. It is apparent that theoretically the exchange marriage
arrangement between two lineage groups meets automatically the
scheme of symmetrical cross-cousin marriages.

428 However, the Garo cross-cousin marriage is generally understood
as matrilateral (Leach, 1951; Homan & Schneider, 1955), and indeed
582 villagers emphasize that they should marry their mother's brother's
592 daughter and many cases of this kind of cross-cousin marriage are to
be found in my data. This involves the crucial point of analysis of
Garo cross-cousin marriages and the key point to an understanding
of the Garo social structure. The fact is that the matrilateral cross-cousin
marriage is strongly preferred in the marriage of the heiress
and the heir-to-be. In other words, ***on the basis of household succession
the matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is the rule.*** To understand this
it is necessary to have a clear notion of the Garo household institution
which is called *nok*.

582 The Garo word *nok* has several meanings: as already described it
means a house, and also the members of a household which form a
61 domestic unit (p. 41), but above all it has the meaning of a combination
592 of local lines; the women who stay in the village where the *nok* exists
and their husbands who come from a village in the opposite moiety.
Marital relationships which provide the basis of the *nok* bridge the
cleavages between the two exogamous lineages of Sangma and of
Marak. They are nodal relationships of the kinship ties between
genealogically interdependent lineages in the whole network of the
Garo social organization. The *nok* is maintained through regular
succession of two offices, the headship of *nok* (husband) and the
ownership of *nok* (wife), through cross-cousin marriage.

429 The heiress *(nokna)* should marry one of her father's sisters' sons
582 (actual or classificatory). The man who marries an heiress (i.e. his
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mother's brother's daughter) is called the *nokrom*. The *nokrom* is 428
the successor to his father-in-law (the head of the *nok*), just as the 582
heiress is the successor to her mother (the owner of the property of 592
the *nok*). The wife and the husband have not only the status of a 61
family, but each of them also represents each local line which continues from the past to the future. The combination of the two particular local lines of the Agitok Khoksep (mother's brother – sister's son) and of the Chambugong Dinajik (mother – daughter) forms the institution called the *nok*. The husband marries into the wife's house, but at the same time it is the house of his mother's brother. Therefore, [591]
the residence pattern of the Garo marriage is not only uxorilocal but also avunculocal. Hence, if the heiress marries a man from another lineage than her father's, it implies a cutting of the matrilineal line of her father's lineage which affects the social network. In such a case, heavy compensation has to be paid to the father's lineage people, centered on *ma'nok* (his mother's *nok*), where the rights of the local line of the *nok* rest. *A'kim* is the Garo word for these rights (see p. 27, n. 2). In this particular case, the Garo avuncu-uxorilocal marriage differs from the uxorilocal marriages of the Khasi, the Hopi, the Zuni and the Trukese; in the same way it also differs from the avunculocal marriages of the Ashanti, and the Trobriands, in which structural differences are involved.

This cross-cousin rule, combined with the rule of succession, binds 428
the marriage of the *nokrom* in the following manner. When the 587
*nokna*'s father dies the *nokrom* must marry the *nokna*'s mother, 606
because the ownership of the property of the *nok* is still retained by his mother-in-law and not by his wife, and will remain so, as long as she is alive. The headship goes with the marriage relationship to the owner of the property. Therefore, in order to succeed to his father-in-law's position, the *nokrom* must marry his mother-in-law. Actually, in most of cases the Garo husband as the head of the *nok*, takes his widowed mother-in-law as his wife besides his young wife.[1] 428 595

When the head of a *nok* dies before the *nokna* marries the *nokrom*,

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[1] A young *nokrom* sometimes refuses to marry his old widowed mother-in-law, as seen in the case described in pp. 50 and 84. In some areas, this rule is not kept strictly. For instance, I found in Emangiri village of the Gara-Gangchin, that this rule is not insisted upon; if the *nokrom* refuses to comply [183]
with it, the people just accept him as the head of a *nok*, even though he does not cohabit with his widowed mother-in-law. The people said that of course it would be nicer if he could cohabit with his mother-in-law; but they do not insist upon it if he does not wish to do so. However, I am reluctant to agree [114]
with Burling's view that sexual relations between the *nokrom* and his mother-in-law after his father-in-law's death seem extremely unlikely (Burling, 1963, pp. 142-143). For the *taboo* (avoidance of intimate relations) between the [835]
*nokrom* and his mother-in-law is radically abandoned by his father-in-law's death, which marks the change of the man's status from being the *nokrom* to the head of the *nok* (see pp. 66-67).

428 595 the *nokrom* will marry both mother and daughter at the same time: the former is recognized as *jikmamong* (principal or first wife), and the latter *jikgite* (secondary wife). In such a case, the widow is usually comparatively young and her daughter still a child. Actual sexual relations with the latter will take place only when she attains puberty. Some times it happens that both mother and daughter have their babies in the same year. The relation between such co-wives as mother and daughter is usually amicable, the situation being taken for granted. Many Garo men pass through such a period of having as co-wives, mother and daughter.

592 611 The *nok* is maintained by the constant succession of the combination of two lines—the male line from the mother's brother to the sister's son and the female line from mothet to daughter established through an actual or classificatory relationship—linked by marriage ties. Gaps caused by death should be filled by the members who have the right to do so through kinship relation. The succession of a *nok* is dependent upon the legal status of husband-wife as well as of two matrilineal lines which are, strictly speaking, local lines rather than descent lines.

428 592 622 The actual process of the rule of succession in the *nok* is shown by Fig. 3, which illustrates the case of the *nokma*'s *nok* of Rombagiri. The 14th *nokma* of Rombagiri, Gobang, had four wives: Nujak (1st), Misak (2nd), Alin (3rd) and Nujin (4th). In fact he married women of those categories; MoBrDa (1st), MoBrWiSi(classificatory)Da (2nd), and MoBrWiSiDaDa (3rd). His last wife was a woman of Chisim *mahari* of Marak, while his other three all belonged to Chambugong. The first wife, Nujak, was in possession of the *a'king* (village land). Nujak was the daughter of the 13th *nokma*, Simjang, who was Gobang's mother's brother. Therefore, her daughter Nokli was the heiress. Gobang's *nokrom*, Rangmal, who was Gobang's sister's son, married Nokli, and when Gobang died, Nujak, according to the rule. This is the point which I have already mentioned: Nujak was the possessor of the property, and Nokli was not, so long as Nujak was alive. As for Rangmal, he should marry Nujak, his mother-in-law, in order to succeed Gobang. Thus Rangmal became the 15th *nokma*. Nujak was already old, and died soon after her marriage to Rangmal. Her daughter, Nokli, automatically succeeded to her office. When Nokli died, leaving Rangmal, the place of Nokli was taken by Kalji (Rangmal married Kalji), because before the death of Nokli, her daughter, Wanji, had not been selected as the *nokma* nor had Rangmal chosen his *nokrom*. This is very important because this case shows that the real daughter is not always the successor of the mother. The husband-wife relation is a no less important factor than the real mother-daughter relation. Thus it is clearly understood that

the *nok* is formed by local lines, not simply by descent lines. What 428
is important is that a woman, just being a daughter, has no exclusive
right to become the successor in the *nok*, unless she is appointed as the 592
*nokma*, the *de jure* successor. Likewise, this procedure applies to also 622
a wife: it is important whether she is the *de jure* owner of the *nok* property or not. In fact, in another case, which will be dealt with later,
the daughter has the right to succeed before the wife.

When Rangmal died leaving his young wife, Kalji, all members 587
of both *mahari* finally agreed to take Chambat as his successor (as 604
the husband of Kalji) because Rangmal had no direct sister's son. 622
Chambat was the grandnephew of Rangmal (his sister's daughter's
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son). Thus a classificatory sister's son is taken in the absence of a
direct sister's son. Chambat is the present (16th) *nokma* of Rombagiri.

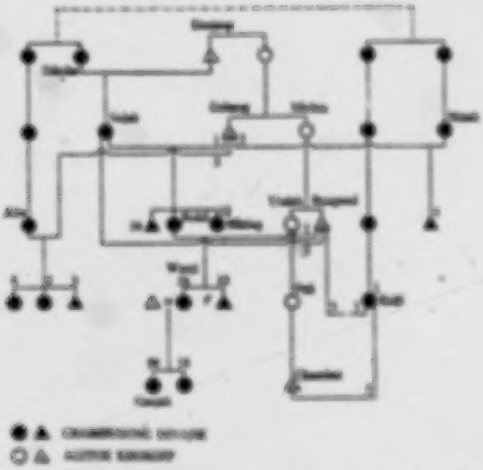

Fig. 3. — *Diagram showing Successions of Nokma of Rombagiri.*

The above succession cases to the *nokma*ship of Rombagiri give 428
typical instances of the succession to a *nok*. Thus the network of
the succession overlaps descent lines by combinations of selected mem- 592
bers of each moiety in various circumstances. It should be understood
that descent lines are not the fundamental lines of succession through
cross-cousin marriage, though the descent defines the categories. The
institutionalized pair of succession lines, the *nok*, are local lines, not
descent lines.

In addition, it is necessary to clear up problems of certain cases 428
which might occur in the succession to the *nok*. If the *nokrom* refuses
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15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

428 to cohabit with his widowed mother-in-law, he cannot become the
587 head of the *nok* by succeeding his late father-in-law. Though this
606 is the traditional rule among the Garo, a young *nokrom* sometimes
592 refuses to cohabit with his old mother-in-law and continues to live
in a separate hut. Recently, in particular, there have been many
complaints to this effect before the District Court at Tura. The
plaintiffs are usually mothers-in-law, which fact embarrasses the judge
—the Hindu Deputy Commissioner of the Garo Hills. During my
[622] field work, I came across such cases. For instance, in Rinshibara
[562] village, the people told me that their *nokna* was a woman though
according to the Garo rule the *nokna* could not be a woman. The
woman *nokna*, who was about sixty years old, complained to me that
[595] her *nokrom* was very bad, he was not at all kind to her. Later,
I found out that her young *nokrom* was a youth of nineteen, and that
he was a very good husband to his young wife (*nokna*); but he had
refused to live and to cohabit with his widowed mother-in-law. Therefore, though he was in the position of the *nokna*, he was not recognised as such because of his refusal to cohabit with his mother-in-law.

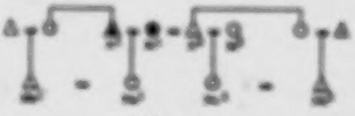

FIG. 4.
*Possible Shift of the Succession to the Nok by Marriage Relations.*

In such a case, he might lose the status of the *nokrom*, and his wife likewise that of the *nokna*. The possible consequences of his refusal to marry his mother-in-law would be as follows (see Fig. 4): his mother-in-law ($M^1$) might marry another man of her late husband's lineage ($N^2$), who will then become the head of the *nok*. Meanwhile when ($M^1$) dies, her husband ($N^2$) may take a woman ($M^2$) from the late wife's lineage in place of ($M^1$). By this marriage ($M^2$) may have a daughter ($Na^2$), who may be elected as the *nokna*, the successor of ($M^1$), and she will marry the *nokrom* ($Nk^2$), her father ($N^2$)'s sister's son. Thus the former *nokrom* ($Nk^1$) and *nokna* ($Na^1$) lose completely their status as successors to the *nok*, unless the ($Na^1$)'s mother ($M^1$) does not marry. It should be remembered that in any case such a development is the result of the decision of both the lineages whom they belong to. Usually the lineage peoples do not like to supersede the *nokna* and the *nokrom* upon whom they once decided, and consequently such cases are very rare, as are the cases of divorce which I shall describe later. Actually in my census, such a change of the *nokrom* and the *nokna* does not occur, and the above description is a theoretical extension based on the information I collected.

428 If the wife dies before the *nokna* and the *nokrom* have been select-
587 ed, the people of the wife's lineage supply a woman in place of the
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15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

late wife, as shown in the case of Rangmal's marriage to Kalji. But 587
if the daughter of the widowed father has already been decided upon 428
as the *nokna*, she is the successor of the late wife (her mother), marrying 592
the *nokrom*; she never marries her father.[1] In this case the father may remarry another woman, but this new wife cannot succeed the late wife, if the *nokna* was already decided upon. The *nokna*'s (daughter's) rights have precedence over those of the wife, since she is the authorised heir of the deceased woman, her mother (cf. pp. 48-49). In such a case the woman who came into the picture as the wife of the widowed father will remain an outsider to the *nok*, without sociological locus in its structure. Actually her status is uncomfortable, and usually she will leave this *nok* as soon as her husband dies. The alternative arrangement in such a case is that the widower who took a secondary wife may leave this *nok*, and establish a new independent *nok* in which this secondary wife can possess full rights as the owner of the *nok*.

Thus actual matrilateral cross-cousin marriage works on the basis 582
of the *nok* institution, not on the basis of the lineage group as such. 592
There is a clear institutionalized *nok* relationship called *nok-chame*. 61
Every *nok* has two kinds of *nok-chame* relations: the *nok* to which the husband is given and the *nok* from which the husband is received, since the matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is the rule at the level of the *nok*. These two *nok* should belong to the opposite moiety in relation to *Ego*. The relationships are shown in the following diagram, Fig. 5. Before his marriage, *Ego* was a member of *Nok* Y; by his marriage he became member of *Nok* A. On marrying the male mem-

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[1] On this point, Professor R. Firth put a question to me when he read the first draft of this manuscript: "why cannot the father marry his daughter?" Up to that time, I had taken it for granted, attributing it to the incest taboo between real father and daughter. After his question I started to rethink the situation. There must be some structural reason for it, since all other rules are reasonably explained in terms of structure; in such a society as the Garo in which the structure is well established, the structure may take precedence over the biological situation. An incest taboo observed in one society is not always the incest taboo of another society: the incest taboo is not biological, but sociological. Then I came to the following conclusion—it seems that the important reason is structural.

The *nokrom* married the widowed mother-in-law in order to acquire the headship of the *nok*. On the other hand, the ownership was automatically handed over to the *nokna* when her mother died. This ownership is not based on the headship in the same way as the headship is based on the ownership; the relation is not that of the chicken and the egg. In relation to the headship, the ownership is logically but not functionally, the primarily important factor. The *nokna* does not need to marry her father in order to acquire the ownership; the ownership is already in her hands, and through it her husband is the head of the *nok*; thus the father theoretically loses the headship and retires from office on his wife's death if the *nokna* and the *nokrom* have already been chosen. In such cases, the *nokrom* has rights to the headship before the father-in-law. Thus, the Garo structure avoids the marriage of the father and the daughter.

582 ber thus becomes part of his mother's brother's *nok*. The female
592 member, if she is the heiress, remains after marriage in the same *nok*
61 However, a non-heiress *(agaté)* has to branch off from her parent's
*nok*, and establish a new *nok* by her marriage

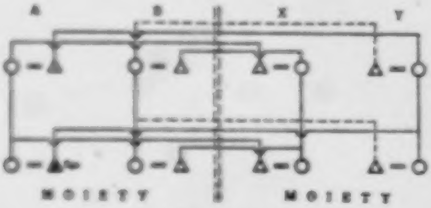

FIG. 5. — Nok-chamé *Relations.*

582 Except for the particular member who are involved in the succes-
592 sion of the *nok*, anyone is free to marry anybody he wishes in the
[61] opposite moiety. However, even in such marriages, the conception
of the *nok* plays an important role. One cannot marry members of a *nok* into which one's sister or brother has married. The matrilateral cross-cousin marriages of the *nokna* and *nokkrom* create considerable matrilateral tendencies even in the marriages of the free members.
[835] The Garo avoids having more than one conjugal relation between members (real siblings) of two *nok*. A man's sister unlikely marry his wife's brother and likewise his brother also unlikely marry his wife's sister.[1] Reciprocal first cousin marriage is thus avoided. Since, as a rule a man *(nokrom)* marries his mother's brother's daughter

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[1] The people of Rombagiri observes this avoidance strictly insisting that they should not have such relations, and in fact, I did not find even single case
[184] of the brother exchange between two *nok*. However I found two cases in a colonial village, Rinsibara (see p. 78). Burling stresses the existence of brother exchange (see Burling, 1958/B; 1963, pp. 158-160) against my earlier discussion (1958/A). Neverthless, he himself states 'Most people, in fact, seem to feel that it is a mildly awkward arrangement' (1963, p. 160). Certainly the avoidance of brother exchange is not a strict rule comparable to that of the exogamy. However, this orientation seems a natural outcome of the structural arrangement of the Garo social organization. For example, it also works logically on the basis of the *nok-chamé* relationship, just discussed. Mere existence of brother exchange itself, which is rather rare, does not affect the basic scheme of the working of the Garo social organization, which I am presenting.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the avoidance of brother exchange applies to only the case between two sets of *real* siblings. Such a case as marriage of two men to each other's classificatory 'sisters' (considered as an similar case by Burling, 1963, p. 160) is a quite different matter (and certainly acceptable and in fact many cases are found), since the latter are not the members of the same *nok*. The difference of my discussion from that of Burling on Garo kinship, is mostly attributed to the analysis in which I distinguish *nok* as an important institution, while Burling seems to fail in differentiating local lines *(nok)* from descent groups.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi
Garo AR?

(*nokna*), the siblings of the nokrom and nokna avoid patrilateral cross- 592
cousin marriage (real, not classificatory). As the result, the orienta- 592
tion of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage dominates over that of patrilateral cross-cousin marriage.

This orientation of the rule differentiates the Garo type of marriage 171
from the Kariera type, in which a man marries his mother's brother's 592
daughter who is also sister to his own sister's husband. On the other 592
hand, the Garo marriage system, an asymmetrical cross-cousin marriage on the basis of *nok*, may be fairly regarded as a matrilineal version of the Murngin system. As with the Murngin, the general rule of marriage is that of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage and this is coupled with a moiety system.[1] However, the Murngin system seems to lack the counterpart of the *nok*. Hence, a mere comparison with the Murngin system may mislead the understanding of the Garo system. First of all, the number of *nok*, the unit of institution on which matrilateral cross-cousin marriage is based, increases constantly through addition of the *nok* created by the marriage of *agate*. Hence the whole picture of a kind of circulating marriage relationship without any fixed number of constant bodies becomes highly complicated.

Secondly, the roots of the *nok* lie in the descent group, the localized 591
lineage. Any member of the authorized local lineage group can be 592
called upon to fill the gap caused by the death of a member of a *nok*. 641
Actually all unmarried members are regarded as an immediate reserve for its continuation. The nature of the *nok* is such that a lack of members is to be expected. *Nok* A might fail to supply a husband to *Nok* B, which is in *nok-chame* relationship with it, or *nok* B might fail to supply an heiress. In such emergency cases they look for lineage members in the immediate reserve. The nearest individual in the descent line is usually taken. It may, however, depend also on personal liking or capacity. The selection is made at a meeting of members of the localized lineage groups of both the husband and the wife. For instance, in deciding upon the nokna and nokrom, the lineage kin of both [illegible] the nokna will be decided upon by the parents in consultation with her mother's brothers, including their lineage members. Likewise, the nokrom will be chosen by the parents of the nokna, especially by her father, in consultation with his lineage members. Thus the formation of a *nok* is dependent upon the functioning of the lineage. In other words, the whole network of the organization does not confer any independent social status on the *nok*. Hence, the matrilateral cross-cousin marriage

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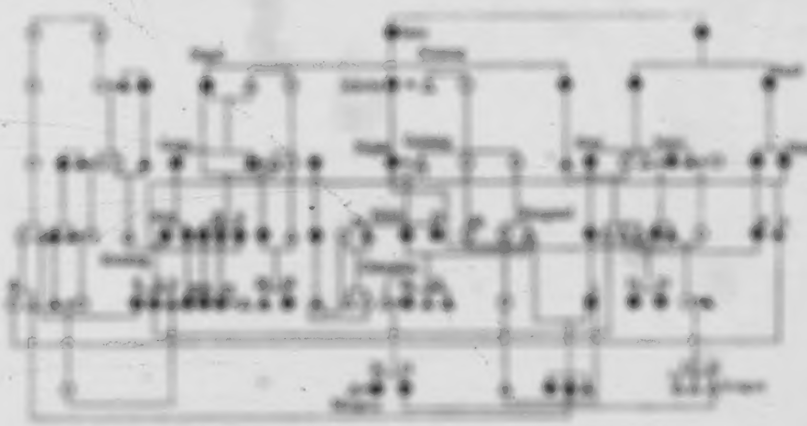
[1] The Murngin system, since presented by Warner (1930-31), has been discussed great deal as one of the important cases in relation to theories of cross-cousin marriage systems (particularly see Lévi-Strauss, 1949, pp. 216-246 and Leach, 1951).

592 arrangements on the level of the *nok* do not cause status differences between the husband-giving *nok* and the husband-receiving *nok*.
615

The economic loss or gain derived from the matrilateral cross-cousin marriage inside an individual *nok* is compensated by the society
621 arrangement which interprets this mechanism as the exchange of men
592 between two localized lineages, the economic basis of which lies in the village land. In this respect, a village is a convenient economic seg-
613 ment of the wider unit, a local lineage group. Actually, the man
621 (or woman) acts, socially, as a member of a localized lineage rather than of a particular village where he (or she) was born. For instance, A (born in village X) may succeed as a *nokrom* of B (born in village Y), or of C (born in village Z), instead of a man born in village X. In this sense, a considerable mobility of the members of a lineage group among villages of the same lineage group may be observed. As shown



● ○ [illegible]
● ○ [illegible]

Fig. 6. — The Network of Cross-cousin Marriages between

in Fig. 6, the network of genealogical cross-cousin relations between the Chambugong [illegible] and the Agitok [illegible] of the present inhabitants of Rombagiri (November, [illegible]) includes a number of dead, as well as living members of other satellite villages of Rombagiri and of Damalgiri.

621 However, the function of the village as an important unit should not be disregarded. The village serves as an effective economic unit accommodating actual households, *nok*, which are the units of the domestic as well as property group, whose members share production

and consumer activities. The village is not only an economic unit based on the a'king, it is also the important ritual unit, the mainspring of the people's life. 621

In conclusion, the analysis of Garo social organization reveals that three units are to be distinguished: *lineage*, *village*, and *nok*, each of which plays an important role, being closely interwoven with the functional entity of the Garo social structure. 61 621 182

## IV. INTERPRETATION OF DISCREPANCIES BETWEEN THE IDEAL RULE AND THE EMPIRICAL FACTS

As I have explained, the moiety arrangement between two particular localized lineage groups through cross-cousin marriage is the fundamental rule. Now if the whole network of the composition of the present population of Rombagiri is analysed, it will be observed that the population of the present village does not conform entirely to this rule. The moiety arrangement is the ideal pattern of a Garo village community but not the actual state. According to the ideal rule, the wives of Rombagiri should belong to Chambugong Dingsik and their husbands should belong to Agitok Khobang. However, as we have seen in the lists of wives and husbands by *machong* (pp. 27-29, Lists 1 & 2), there are ten different *machong* besides the traditional *machong*. Thus actual conditions are very complicated: firstly because a minority practises virilocal residence in a society whose arrangements are generally uxorilocal,[4] and secondly, because marriage relations sometimes extend to the third local lineage group apart from the traditional opposite lineage group. These two variations occur easily amongst members of the community who are free from the rigid cross-cousin principle, *e.g.* non-*nokma* and non-*nokrom*. The following will explain the multiformity of the different lineages in regard to the traditional arrangement as found in the composition of the present population of Rombagiri. 182 587 591 61 621 [183]

Virilocal residence brings complexity into the local arrangements [illegible] lineage is to be A), there may be found women of lineage B, who belong to the opposite moiety in relation to A. In the case of Rombagiri, women, as a rule, are to be Chambugong Dingsik, but actually there are Agitok Khobang wives and Chambugong Dingsik husbands.

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[4] In this discussion the terms 'uxorilocal' and 'virilocal' are used at a village level: the uxorilocal residence for the case in which a couple resides in the wife's village, not necessarily in the wife's parents' house. Likewise, in the case of virilocal, a couple resides in the husband's village, but never in his parents' house.

182 582 591 67 621 What factors have brought about virilocal establishments in a uxorilocal arrangement? The study of Rombagiri reveals these factors to be due to personal attachments. After the appearance of a great male personality such as Gobang *laskar* of Rombagiri, his descendants show great attachment to him and desire to remain in their natal village. In the village remarks were often heard such as "I am Gobang *laskar*'s so-and-so," which indicates a cognatic or affinal relationship with Gobang. Thus, people like to explain their social position in a community through a great personality. They are proud of it and consider themselves to be of a social status rather superior to that of others. These people, Gobang's sons, grand-sons and nephews, had a strong tendency to stay in Rombagiri, bringing their wives to the village. And they form an influential family group, together with their sisters and their husbands. The core of this group is not a matrilineal descent group, but rather a kind of an ambilateral descent group, the members of which linked through Gobang *laskar*. As manifested in such a particular reason for the existence of virilocal marriages, in general it seems that when a man has a particularly strong attachment to his natal village in various reasons involved, it is not so difficult to bring the wife from the opposite lineage group instead of his going to his wife's village.[9] More important is the arrangement between the localized lineages: the actual residential form seems of secondary significance to it.

The descendants of the women of such virilocal marriages are always addressed or classified as members of the opposite society. Their descendants may, under the exogamous rule, marry any member of the village in which they were born. As a result, marriages occur between members of the same village, which fact gives again more chances of creating houses of *Agitok* wives; because of uxorilocal usage, daughters of such wives naturally stay near their mothers' houses. At the same time, it gives men easier opportunities to remain in their natal village: for a Chambugong man will automatically stay in his village if he takes a wife among daughters of such wives, and so

[illegible] wife or two in his village [illegible] to have a male relative present" (Burling, 1957, p. 200; and the similar statements in Burling, 1956 A and 1956 B). The same view was also held by D. M. Schneider in his comment on this manuscript. These views are obviously based on a concept such as the strong cohesion and interdependence of brothers and sisters, which Schneider presents as one of the distinguishing features common to matrilineal peoples (see Schneider, 1961, Introduction). Though I do not deny their view to be true to a certain extent in the Garo case, I am reluctant to take it as the only factor or the primarily decisive one in this particular situation. For I take the view that the Garo exemplify a quite different structure from other matrilineal systems such as appear in Schneider's just mentioned work; among the Garo solidarity of the descent group is minimized (see p. 45). This point will be clarified in the concluding discussion of this book.

Agitok man born of such wives need not change his village on his 182
marriage: he can just marry a Chambugong woman born in the same 582
village.

The second variation is the result of marriages with members of 591
the third group. A woman (or man) may sometimes marry a member
from another localised lineage of the opposite *chatchi*, a quite different 61
group from the one with which their own members have traditional 621
relations. Once established, a new *sok* by such a marriage conforms
to the logical succession rule of the *sok* as found among the traditional [592]
*sok*, by which the relations between the two lineages become an insti-

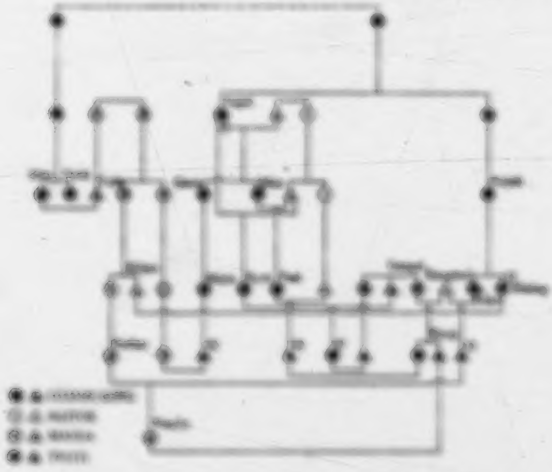

FIG. 7. — *Cross-cousin Relations with the Third Local Lineages of Rombagiri.*

tutionalized continuum, inserting itself into the traditional local arrangement. This phenomenon is illustrated in the cases of Rombagiri by the establishment of the Manda and the Tigiti lineages. The Manda came to have marital relations with the Chambugong of Rombagiri [illegible] village of Rombagiri, Nalsi's elder sister, Simi married Tuja (Manda). (see Figs. 6 & 7). This might be regarded as one of the first steps towards the disintegration of the Chambugong Dinajik-Agitok Khoksep relationship. It is said that Tuja, being a very influential man, sold some part of the Chambugong *a'king* to his own people, the Manda and this became the *a'king* of the present Dinajigiri and Makragiri (see p. 36). Since then, the Manda have encroached upon the Chambugong area and soon continuous marriage relations were established.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

182 Here, the logical extension of the principle of the nok and nok-chamoi was made: the relation of the Chambugong of Rombagiri and the
582 Manda of Makragiri became constant. Thus, there are many members
591 of the Manda in the genealogy of Rombagiri, whose cross-cousin relationship can be seen in Fig. 7.

61 In a similar way, Tigiti came upon the scene when Gangri became
681 Rangmal Jonker's fourth wife: this resulted marriage relations between Tigiti and Chambugong as shown in Fig. 7. The Manda and the Tigiti have now become the third groups in Rombagiri after the Agitok. Both Manda and Tigiti are of Sangma like the Agitok. It is important, however, that to whatever extent the marriage relationship may go, the exogamous rule on the level of *chatchi* should be strictly maintained.[1]

Complications such as those arising from the practice of virilocal residence and from marriages with the third local lineage groups have resulted in multiformity of lineages in one community as in the case of Rombagiri, which again increases the chances of village endogamy. [178] The present Garo villages are in a state of considerable flux. This contrasts with their traditional view of their former structure, allegedly well arranged and restricted in relationships, and in fact it may be really due to newly created circumstances. This tendency has increased everywhere since the cessation of fighting between the villages of Sangma and Marak and elsewhere in the Garo Hills; modern developments in the Hills allow the Garo more frequent and closer contacts with each other in various ways. As may be noted, several new marital relations with the new lineages of Rombagiri, such as Chambugong Macho, Chambugong Anil, Manda Akolsanda, Manda Pakrau, Rangsa and Gabil, etc., have taken place. However, the majority of the Garo still follow the traditional moiety arrangement, especially among the older nok, and in fact, the people ideally still adhere strongly to it.

The multiformity of lineages in one community has appeared in its extreme amongst the Atong and the Garo-Ganchin. The village [illegible] the Sintang, consists of members of Amgong Sangma, Sintang Marak, Richil Sangma and Bonchol Sangma, each of which are quite numerous, and form thus an endogamous community like those we shall find among the Khasis. According to actual lineage members, there are nowadays no clearly distinguishable exogamous geographical units in

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[1] In Fig. 7, this rule was broken in two cases: the marriages of Rangmal (Agitok Sangma) with his fourth wife, Gangri (Tigiti Sangma), and of Rimji (Tigiti Sangma) with Nengje (Manda Sangma). Villagers regard them as an extremely shameful relationship especially the latter marriage (because the former was a secondary marriage). The natives call such a relationship *sdki-bomo*. They had to pay a considerable fine. [684]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

this area. Such a high degree of integration may be due to the small size and close distribution of the local lineages. Even the possession of *a'king* by a particular lineage becomes nominal. Emangiri belongs also to this type of community. There are two dominant *mahari*, the Manda and the Rima, including other neighbouring Garo-Ganchin *mahari*, as follows: 182 582 591 61 621

List 3. *Numbers by Mahari of Household Heads and their Wives of Emangiri.*

| *Mahari* | *Wives* | *Husbands* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Rima Marak | 18 | 18 |
| 2. Manda Sangma | 13 | 16 |
| 3. Arong Marak | 8 | 3 |
| 4. Rakam Marak | 4 | 4 |
| 5. Nongmalja Sangma | 4 | 4 |
| 6. Rongmuthu Marak | 5 | 5 |
| 7. Mangsang Sangma | 2 | 1 |
| 8. Michong Sangma | 1 | 3 |
| 9. Jengchham Marak | 0 | 0 |
| 10. Wanbat Sangma | 1 | 2 |
| 11. Chatbak Marak | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 57 | 57 |

Out of the total of 57 couples representing all of the households, 3 took virilocal residence: these were husbands whose parents lived in this village but who took their wives from outside the village; 41 cases are marriages within the village. The remaining 13 cases are those in which husbands from outside the village married women of the village. The above list should be compared with the list of Rombagiri (p. 42, List 2). In Rombagiri the traditional Chambugong-Agitok relationship can still be clearly seen in the distribution of the numbers of wives and of husbands by *mahari*. Households of Chambugong wives form the majority and there are more traditional Agitok husbands than of other *mahari*. On the other hand, in Emangiri, the numbers of wives and husbands of Rima and Manda are almost the same, so that the tendency towards village endogamy is more marked. However, the existence of a paired traditional lineage arrangement can be seen amongst the members of Rima and Manda who form the largest *mahari* in the village. Besides these two *mahari*, the third *mahari*, Arong Marak, is also fairly numerous. As a matter [595] of fact, there are three *nokpante* (bachelors' dormitories), one of the Rima, one of the Manda and one of the Arong. This fact shows that in Emangiri, besides the traditional *mahari*, the Rima, the Manda and the Arong have also the right to regard this village as their own, though the *a'king* belongs to the Rima. The villagers take for granted

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Garo AR5

182 such multiformity of more than two lineages within one village. In this way Garo traditional rules and ideal arrangements are being 582 modified greatly.

591 One of the leading educated Garos, who belongs to the Gara-61 Ganchin explained this phenomenon to me as follows: "In the begin-621 ning we used also to take a husband from a particular village. But afterwards, our families used to worry about whether our sons were happy or not in their wives' houses. If they marry inside a village, such worry ceases, and so people started to marry inside the village. [178] Nowadays marriages inside a village have become quite common." This might be an explanation of this tendency to village endogamy. However, the fundamental reason must be regarded as the consequence of political changes effected by the British administration, coupled with the increase of the population and its branching off into satellite villages, which, I think, inevitably weakened the lineage solidarity and complicated inter-lineage relations. It is needless to add that [177] the recent modernization and Christianization are another significant factor.

The most important underlying facts in the process of disintegration of the Garo social organization are the following: the tendency to village endogamy is paralleled with the disappearance among the people of the *a'jikea* concept which lies at the basis of Garo social organization. Another is that the advent of a third lineage group, which inevitably renders the composition of a local group more complex, tends to ignore the function of institutionalized cross-cousin marriages as an organic whole upon which the core of the Garo social organization is founded.

## V. Nokmaship and Power Relations among Families in a Village Community

61 In this section, I shall discuss some political aspects of the village community, keeping in mind the information given in previous sections.

621 Each Garo village community is an autonomous political unit, the 622 head of which is the *nokma*. The *nokma* holds his office through the right of the *a'king* which theoretically belongs to his wife and her [623] *mahari*. The office of the *nokma* is hereditary through the *nok* institution. The *nokma's nokrom* is his successor. The office of the *nokma* has the intrinsic importance from the point of view of the Garo organization: it is the pivot of the village organization, through which the basic network of the entire Garo society is woven. In fact the *nokma* plays the leading role as the central figure in the village activities, and externally represents the village. However, the position of the

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

*nokma* is very delicate. As a matter of fact, the *nokma* cannot be 61
compared to a chief who exercises his political authority with various 621
social and economic advantages. The *nokma* is rather social and 622
economic representative of the village without having a distinguished
advantage or authority.

The *nokma*'s position becomes clear when we consider the character- 592
istics of the Garo social structure, associated with the *nok* institution. 61
Though every *nok* is independent, the function of the *nok* is always 621
backed by all the members of the two lineages in moiety relation. 622
No *nok* can develop a social solidarity or a differentiated status from others, as already discussed (see pp. 53-54). The *nokma*ship also follows this principle. No doubt, the *nokma*'s *nok* has prestige as the oldest *nok* among the *nok* of the village. The word *nokma* itself indicates 'mother of the *nok*,' according to the people's explanation. However, the *nokma* (including his family members) cannot claim any superiority of status, because he is simply a selected member from both local lineage groups, in which the members are of equal status in the kinship network. Any male member of one lineage group may become the *nokma*. The opportunity is provided according to the circumstances.[1] Thus, structurally, the *nokma*'s status does not confer on him any distinguishable social rank.

With regard to the economic organization, the *nokma*'s status is 423
also basically equal to that of the others. Though the *a'king* belongs 621
to the *nokma*'s wife, it is actually held in common by all the inhabitants 621
of the village. Every member of the village has the right to cultivate 622
the village land. The possession of the *a'king* is simply represented by the *nokma*'s wife. As a rule, no portion of the *a'king* can be sold or mortgaged by the *nokma*, since it is the common property of the villagers. The village land is divided into several parts on the basis of the annual rotation of jhum cultivation (see Map 3). Every year one of these parts is distributed to each household according to the number of its members (see Map 4). The share of the *nokma*'s family is allotted in the same way as that of the other families. The *nokma*, in theory, has no special economic advantage over commoners. Sometimes indeed the *nokma*'s family is poorer than the others.[2]

[1] Indeed the villagers, together with lineage people, have also the right to dismiss him from the *nokma*ship should he fail seriously to perform his duties, as happened a few years ago in a neighbouring village of Rorabagiri, where the *nokma* was replaced because of his failure to arrange the funeral of his wife.

[2] As a matter of fact, when I was in the Hills, the members of the Council of the Garo Hills were considering giving the *nokma* some economic advantages thus raising their position in a village community. The series of political and economic changes occurred since the British rule, which gradually leads to disintegration of the traditional Garo system, have obviously affected the status and function of the *nokma*. These factors also related to the recent decline of *nokma*'s vigour. [177]

622 The *nokma*'s expenses are high, the *nokma* being the centre of
social activities within the village as well as outside. The entertainment
[574] of visitors rests on his shoulders. It is the usual custom for
visitors who have no close kin in the village to stay at the *nokma*'s
[527] house and to eat there. Festivals, funerals, and marriage ceremonies
are conducted in his presence, and as the *nokma* does, he usually
offers extra meals and drinks to the people. Actually, such social
[556] activities, which result in considerable expense to the *nokma*, are
sometimes taken over by some rich and powerful man in the village,
if the *nokma* is poor.[1] Such a man is then also addressed as *nokma*
or *nokma-gamna*: but this *nokma* should be differentiated from the
*a'king-nokma* (*nokma* of the village land) which I am discussing at
present, as the Garo distinguish clearly between two kinds of *nokma*.

556 The fairly well balanced economy based upon the allotment of
621 land to every household in the village according to the number of its
members does produce nevertheless some relative differences in their
wealth, ascribable to varying methods of management and to the
labour force available in a particular household. Therefore rich and
poor do appear, though the differentiation may not be great or constant.
When a man becomes very wealthy, the villagers address him as
*nokma*, so as to encourage him to take on some extra activities such
as those just mentioned. And when such a man becomes extremely
[527] wealthy by native standards, the villagers expect him to give a great
feast. Not only the villagers, but also many related peoples come to
partake of it. They enjoy eating and drinking for several days—it
[301] has no fixed period. After the feast, he is offered a silver ring for
his arm, this being the greatest honour and prestige the Garo can
[554] confer, and he is addressed as *nokma-gamna*. However, by gaining
such great prestige, he usually becomes again a poor man, having
used up all his stock for the fantastic feast. Thus the Garo prevent
any *nok* from acquiring a constant economic superior status.

621 In the absence of political authority, the village community, the
households of which have basically socially and economically equalitarian
622 status, tends to have a somewhat delicately balanced temporal
[554] internal rank-order or power-relationship among the families resulting
from various given factors. The following are the major factors: the
higher prestige for the pedigree of older *nok*; the nearness to
the descent line of the women to the wives of precedent *nokma*; the
advantage of and respect paid to the age of the head of *nok*; friendly
support given by more adult males (heads of *nok*); economic and
social capacity and achievement as the head of the *nok*, as a rich

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[184] [1] Likewise, if a *nokma* is a Christian as in the case of Rombagiri, in a certain activities in which the *nokma* has to play a religious role, a wealthy and senior *songsarek* (non-Christian) is to take his role.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

man and a man of leadership. The last factor is essential; when a 621
man has this quality in greater measure than the rest of the villagers,
combined with any one of the other factors mentioned, he is a very 622
powerful figure. The 14th *nokma* of Rombagiri, Gobang, was a typical example of a man who had all the above qualities. He was the most outstanding person among the villagers. Many stories which showed his powerful personality as the leader were told to me. He was, no doubt, the richest man, having four wives altogether. He fully used the advantage of being in the position of the *nokma* and was later elected as the *loskor*, the head of the nineteen villages around Rombagiri.

I should say this kind of personality, combined with *nokma*ship, is rather rare. In a village where no distinguished leader comes forth, there usually exists power relationships between more than two groups of *nok*; this has also been the situation in Rombagiri since the death of Gobang. Certain families in the village support the *nokma* mainly in their own interest; other groups vie with the former group, while the rest stand as a third power or maintain indifference. This kind of situation is intensified in such events as the election of a new *nokma*. Theoretically, the post of *nokma* carries in itself no advantage other than prestige, as we have discussed; but it provides considerable advantage for the accumulation of political power by an individual or a group of people. This is the reason why intrigues and competition among parties, as well as among individuals, become intensified when deciding upon a new *nokma*. This situation is well illustrated in the case of the election of the present *nokma* of Rombagiri.

Several year ago, the last *nokma*, Rangmal, died, leaving his young wife, Kalji, and without appointing his *nokrom*, as already mentioned. There were many intrigues amongst the families in Rombagiri for the choosing of his successor. (For the following discussion, refer to Figs. 3 & 6.) Mingrin (20) whose wife, Ganjak is the direct descendant of Gobang as well of Rangmal, tried to obtain the *nokma*ship by marrying Kalji. Another candidate was Kiljan (12) (in spite of his being Mana *nokma*'s) whose wife, Mising, is the daughter of Gobang by his first wife, Nujak. The wives of both the candidates belong to the direct descent line of Gobang's first wife. Among males related to the descendants of Gobang's second and fourth wives, there was no one who could be Kalji's husband. The sons and grandsons of Gobang's third wife, including the husbands of their sisters, joined forces and formed a strong third party against the two candidates. This third group also represented the Christian population of the village since Gobang kept only his third wife in the later period of his life when he had become a Christian: his remaining wives were given to Rangmal, his successor. This Christian group had no suitable bachelor who could marry Kalji. They, therefore, started to seek an Agitok

621 622 man amongst their relatives, who could be the *nokma* under their control. Meanwhile, they persuaded Kalji to embrace Christianity. Kalji, becoming a Christian, was backed by the third group who were trying to counter the schemes of Mingrin and Kiljan. As Kalji lived alone, Mingrin's *saditan* (wife's sister's husband—this relation is considered as one of the most close and friendly), Songan (18) had sympathized with her, and made her a *jam* (store house). Mingrin became very angry about this. Later on the relationship between these two *saditan* further deteriorated. Finally Songan adopted Christianity and joined the third group. The third group, after two years' intrigues and desperate search, finally found Chambat, a grandnephew of Rengmal, who was living at Silsochigiri and agreed to become the *nokma* as well as being converted to Christianity.

In comparison with the third group, Kiljan and Mingrin might have had a stronger voice since their wives belonged to the direct descent line of Gobang's first wife. However, the third group was too strong for them. Actually, this third group had more adult male members than the other parties. As we have already discussed elsewhere (p. 56), the sons and grandsons being very much attached to the great figure, Gobang, and practised virilocal residence in their marriage. Though their mother (or grandmother) was the third wife of Gobang, they say that she was his most important one, since he kept her after his conversion to Christianity, and she was the wife who was present at his death. Furthermore, she also belonged to one of the oldest *mak* of Rombagiri. I observed that this group was becoming more and [178] more influential and powerful in the village, having the advantage of being Christian: Christians usually lead modernization and development in the Hills.

429 592 621 6'. The foregoing is an instance concerned with particular kin groups. The other aspect, the distribution of fields, presents a more general example of power relations within the village community. As I have stated elsewhere, the fields change hands every year over a seven-year period of rotation. Upon the eigth year of this seven-year cycle, the distribution of the field to each household usually follows the last pattern. But in seven years there are usually considerable changes in the numbers of each household; while some families have moved away, some have died, and new families have appeared. Hence, every year a large meeting, comprising the heads of each household in a village, is held after the harvest of the current year. At this meeting there are usually long discussions and sometimes even quarrels develop when the new boundaries of each family's share are being determined. In disputes of this kind, the *nokma* has no authority to give a final decision. An agreement is usually arrived at on the basis of the best opinion put forth. Those who swayed the meetings

most skillfully during my sojourn were the representatives of the 423
Christian group mentioned above; others were Kiljan (12) who was the 592
*sordar* of Rombagiri and who tried to become *nokma*; Rintang (9) 621
and Jinban (16) both of whose wives belong to one of the oldest
lines descended through Najol. Rintang was one of the oldest men 61
in Rombagiri. These people usually have a stronger voice in the various matters concerned with village life, and the *nok* of these men appeared to rank somewhat higher amongst the villagers. I found that their fields lay in the more fertile portion of the slope, or contained a proportionally larger share of fertile soil than that of the others. The more fertile portion is considered to be in the lower part of the hills where there is more water. These parts are usually occupied by older *nok*, while new *nok* (households of newly married couples) have their share mostly in the upper part of the hills.

Another clear indication of the advantageous position of these particular *nok* is the orange gardens situated along the river where the jhum field ends. These orange gardens are owned by each household permanently. Only those *nok* which enjoy the advantages mentioned above possess them. These gardens bring in a far better income (in cash) than the jhum field. I asked these people whether they had the consent of the villagers to make their own garden, since these are part of the village land. What they replied was, "no, we just made them, nobody could object to it, as we have the right to do it." These families, no doubt, belong to the traditional lineage of Rombagiri —the wives or mothers are Chambugong Dinajik and have a advantageous social status, which is closely associated with their economic standing.

It is clear that, to a certain extent, the women's descent lines confer the internal rank order, and serve to form groups—a kind of descent group including their spouses—in a comparatively shallow generation depth. This fact implies that, in spite of various factors which do not allow the differentiation of *nok*, or the formation of particular descent groups, the descent line in shallow depth functions as criteria to establish a temporal body of power. Further, a village may include many members of various lineages other than the traditional one, and political power within a village community is found in those households where the wives (or sisters) belong to the traditional lineage under which name the *a'king* is kept. Thus, though the households of the traditional lineage may not appear in great number in the census, the underlying situation reveals that the existence of these households has a much more important meaning than appears in the statistics.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

## VI. FORMATION AND STABILITY OF THE DOMESTIC FAMILY

592 The simplest Garo domestic pattern is the elementary family: husband, wife and their children. The composition of a domestic group changes according to the cycle of the *nok* institution, as we have seen. It increases with the heiress' husband *(nokrom)* and her children, while her siblings leave to form other domestic families.

591 According to custom, the *agati* (daughters other than the heiress)
establish independent domestic families with their husbands one or
592 two years after their marriage, during which period they prepare their new houses. The *agati*'s husband[1] lives with his wife's family, works in his wife's parents' field for the first year, and, in the coming year, marked by the new distribution of a jhum field, the newly married couple obtain a share in the fields. At the same time, their house is built in the village of the wife with the help of the villagers, the expense being met by the bride's parents with whom her husband has worked for a year or more as a member of the domestic unit. Thus a new domestic family, a *nok*, is established.

591 In the case of the *nokrom* who is destined to succeed his father-in-
592 law as the head of the family, the newly-wed *nokrom* and his wife
606 are usually given a small newly-built temporary house next to his
[428] father-in-law's house, so that a newly-married couple are separated from other members of their *nok* and can enjoy matrimonial privacy. As already mentioned, however, they are not an independent domestic unit. They form one productive and consumer economic unit together with the wife's parents and other members of the *nok*. They work
[587] together in the same field,[2] but sleep separately. When the *nokrom*'s father-in-law dies, his family joins his mother-in-law, whom he marries,
[835] and he succeeds to the headship of his father-in-law. This residential arrangement is important in relation to the sex taboo of the Garo. They observe a strict sex taboo between the son-in-law and the mother-in-law. However, this only obtains while the father-in-law is alive. As soon as the latter dies, the situation is entirely reversed—son-in-law and mother-in-law are virtually forced to live in the same house. Thus the independent sleeping arrangements for the *nokna* and *nokrom* are not only intended to protect the matrimonial life of the young

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[1] *Agati*'s husband has no particular name like *nokrom* simply called *chawari* (son-in-law) but in the next generation there will be need to have a *nokrom*. The *nokrom* and the *nokna* are created in every household, once *nok* is established.

[2] The portion of the field allotted to each domestic family is adjusted every year to the new distribution of households inside the village and to the changes in number of each domestic family.

591
couple, but also to avoid sexual relations between the son-in-law and 592
the mother-in-law. The residence pattern is a clearly reflected picture 606
of the *nok* structure.

### *Implications of* nokpanté *and Courtship.*

Sons and daughters *(agaté)* are members who leave the house 591
on marriage, while a *nokrom* is a member whose addition increases 592
the number of the unit. Hence, sons and daughters *(agaté)* are fluid elements of the perpetual continuance and the solidarity of a domestic family, i.e. the *nok*. According to their ideal rule, and in fact, to their general practices, the following is the picture resulted from their marriage arrangements. At the fission of the *nok*, daughters *(agaté)* have many advantages in comparison with sons since, though they have to leave their parents' house on marriage, they establish new households in the same familiar environment, i.e. in the same village; while sons must change their *nok* from their father's to their maternal uncle's (*nokrom*'s case) or to the new *nok* established in their maternal uncle's village (non-*nokrom*'s case). They have to start their married life in an entirely different village from that in which they were born and grew up.

Usually uxorilocal marriages militate against the status of husbands 591
and constitute an element of tension in the relations of parents-in-law 592
and son-in-law, as we shall see among Khasi marriages. In the case 604
of the Garo, these disadvantages are well covered by their social 606
system and usages. First of all, as already discussed, Garo uxorilocal 613
marriage is at the same time avunculocal marriage; a man's father-in- [171]
law is always the actual or classificatory maternal uncle or at least of his own lineage people. This father-in-law can check various pressures from the wife's lineage people and relatives-in-law upon the newly arrived bridegroom. Not only within the single *nok*, but also within the village community, the bridegroom will find many familiar faces belonging to his own lineage people, who have also come to the village as husbands.

The first orientation and shift from father to maternal uncle is 575
experienced by the boy when he enters the *nokpanté* (bachelor's dor- 604
mitory). Boys become members of a *nokpanté* when five or six years 613
old. This institution prepares them to become conscious of their lineage and social group, of which the members belonging to the same *mahari* gather at the *nokpanté*, situated at the centre of the village (see Map 7). Each village has its own *nokpanté*. If a village includes more than two major lineages, a *nokpanté* is made for each dominant lineage, as for instance in Emangiri, which has three *nokpanté* in the

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

575 village (see p. 59). Boys of the same lineage gather at the *nokpante*[1]
after their supper and spend the night there chatting about field work
604 and love affairs, etc., and playing music (they practise music and
613 dance for their festivals). They are all unmarried young men of the same lineage and the eldest boy becomes the leader while the others follow in strict order according to their ages. (It is not merely ideal; I observed this in their daily life.) It is an entirely masculine com-
[562] munity. Women are not allowed to enter the *nokpante*, although in festivals, sweet-hearts bring food-stuffs to their lovers through the back door (the front entrance is forbidden to women). In the *nokpante*, boys cultivate friendship and develop great intimacy and co-operation among themselves. Thus, men of the same lineage grow up together. The role of the *nokpante* has a great influence on their social life and prepares them for adulthood and married life, as they become more and more conscious of lineage comradeship. Actually their social orientation gradually shifts from their fathers to their maternal uncles, as they approach a marriageable age. Reciprocally, the maternal uncle begins to look after his nephews, paying less attention to his own sons. Thus, the *nokpante* plays an intermediate role in the passage of a man's life from his natal house to his maternal uncle's house or village.

593 Actual relations with maternal uncles are kept up by occasional
visits from both sides. When an important event occurs in one of
604 the two groups (a paire of particular local lineage groups) the opposite
613 group of villagers visits the village. For instance, on the occasion of marriage, serious illness, funerals, periodical festivals, etc., villagers of the opposite local lineage group would come. In such cases boys visit first their *mama*'s (maternal uncle's) house. The *mama* himself often visits his natal village and gives special attention to his maternal nephews, which involves looking for his successor among them. Thus, though a boy works in his father's field and dines with his parents, his psychological and social orientation to his *mama*'s *nok* and village becomes more and more pronounced as he grows up.

The last break with his natal family occurs at his marriage. The resistance to the change is manifested in the process of courtship which will be explained presently. By marriage a man is transferred from his father's authoriry to that of his *mama*. Especially if he is appointed to the *nokrom* of his *mama*, he is under the direct authority
591 of the *mama*, marrying his daughter. Even a non-*nokrom* stays at his

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[1] Boys who belong to minor lineages in a village and have no *nokpante* of their lineage, join the *nokpante* of the major lineage of the village. However, according to my observation, some of them may not join. The function of the
[178] *nokpante* seems to be declining as the traditional social organization is becoming looser.

father-in-law's house (which is often his actual or classificatory *mama's* 591
house) during the preliminary period of his marriage before he gets an independent house. At the same time, a newly-arrived husband 575
finds amongst the husbands of his wife's village many of his *nokpante*
comrades whom he can consult and from whom he can gain support 591
in matters of importance. These husbands develop strong friendship 592
and cohesion amongst men of the same lineage, the basis of which was 619
laid in the *nokpante* period, thus combating the various disadvantages and hardships of coming to a new village.

The psychological, social and economic change in a man's life is well arranged by their social system and usages. The system of cross-cousin marriage and the *nokpante* play an important role as an organized body to protect husbands in their new *nok*. Further, Garo men, as individuals, keep on their best behaviour in order to establish themselves securely in their new *nok*. This is fully apparent in the picture of their courtship.

The Garo have a peculiar custom in proposing. The man who 583
makes a marriage arrangement is the head of a *nok*, the father. Accord- 584
ing to the rule, the successor of the father is his sister's son and not
his own son. For the Garo *nok*, the most important concern is to 592
find an ideal successor, *nokrom*. After the members of the *nok* and 613
the *chra* (wife's kin) have selected their *nokna* from amongst their daughters (actual as well as classificatory), the head of the family chooses his *nokrom* from among his sisters' sons, in consultation with both lineage people. Then the head of the *nok* proposes that the *nokrom*-to-be should marry his daughter, *nokna*.[1] The boy, or the boy's family, never gives a definite answer to the first proposal and usually the boy's answer is negative.

Some time after the first negotiation, all the young boys in the village, who belong to the same *mahari* as the girl, i.e., the members of the *nokpante*, plan stratagems to bring the boy to the girl who wants to marry him. They suddenly attack the boy either at home or in the field, and bring him to the girl's house by force. The young boys of the girl's *mahari* grip his arms and surround him so that he cannot escape. Thus, he is forcibly brought to the girl's village. In day time, he is made to visit every house in the village under the strict guard of these boys. In fact they never free his arms, being afraid that he might run away. At nightfall, they bring the boy inside the girl's house. During that night, all the boys who belong to the girl's *mahari* do not sleep at the *nokpante*, but in the girl's house. The boy who was brought in sits in the corner of the room, 584

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[1] *Agate's* marriage also follows the same pattern; however, the desire to get a particular boy is naturally less, and more flexibility in choosing the husband is seen.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

534 full of shyness, while the members of the family and the boys enjoy chatting. The mother of the girl offers them rice beer, corn, and tobacco, etc. When they sleep, the boy is placed next to the girl and the other boys sleep around them, keeping a boy near the door to guard him from escape. In spite of such strong guards, the boy often escapes during the night by breaking the bamboo wall with his *dao* (hatchet). In most cases the boy's village is far away. Garo husbands say they were never afraid of tigers, leopards and elephants at such a time. One must run away! Afterwards, another attempt is made to bring the boy back. It might be weeks or months later, depending on the circumstances. Again he is forced to spend the night in the girl's house and again he does his best to escape. If successful he may be brought back a third time.

When I stayed in a village, I came across such an occasion. The boy sat in the corner of the room, near the entrance hiding his face in his arms. The girl's mother said to me, "I don't know whether he wishes to marry my daughter or not. This is already the third time, but he is still like that." She was worrying very much. If the boy really likes the girl, he shows a friendly face. The third time the guard is especially strong and no opportunity to escape is given. In such a case, he pretends that he might stay with the girl for a few days. When the tension has relaxed, he might offer to show the girl to his parents. Then the young couple start out for his village. Sometimes he runs away somewhere in the midst of jungle, leaving the girl alone. The poor girl, full of misery, comes back to her house. When such a couple passes through a village, people peep out and whisper to each other, "Look! a young couple is passing." In the beginning I could not understand what this meant. There is some significance behind it as to whether the girl could really keep the boy or not. In spite of her eagerness towards the boy, should he not respond, the girl sometimes goes to his parents' house and assists in their domestic work as well as in the *jhum* field in order to show that she is worthy enough to marry their son. When night falls, the girl prepares some delicacies which the boy likes, proceeds to the back entrance of the *nokpante* and calling him shows her affection for him. By such means the girl does her best to lure him and get him as her husband.

584 Among Christian Garo, the process of proposal is essentially the same though it takes on a different form. A Christian Garo does not
[184] ask boys of the same *mahari* to bring a potential husband to a girl, since the *mahari* comradeship is not regarded as so important a matter
[799] and these boys often do not sleep in the *nokpante*. Moreover, they do not care to follow the same customs as the *songsarek* (non-Christians). The Christian way of proposal is as follows: since most of them can read and write, a girl sends a letter to the boy whom she likes, request-

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi
Garo AR5

ing marriage. This is not a love letter in our sense, it is only a varia- 584
tion of the traditional Garo proposal. The following letters are examples of those written by Garo Christians:[1]

1. —The first letter usually accompanies one written by her father— 539

Rombagiri. 1st, Dec. 1955.

Dear nephew, Roprakangjil Sangma, 584

I am writing a few lines to you, enclosing my daughter's letter to you, with an idea of knowing your intention in your reply. If you could marry my daughter, Ganjak, I would be very happy. I don't mean to say that my daughter is a wonderful girl, but I hope that you would kindly help your maternal uncle and consider my request. For a man it is necessary to take a partner in this world and to have a happy married life. If you receive this letter, kindly reply to us, as I am anxious to hear from you.

With best wishes, I remain,
Yours sincerely,
Your uncle,
Gindidipa Sangma.

Rombagiri. 1st, Dec. 1955.

Dear friend, Roprakangjil Sangma,

I am writing a few lines to you today, and I hope you will pay attention to my words. As my father has written to you, I request you to take me as your wife. I am ready to serve you. I don't claim to be clever and beautiful, but one must have a partner in this world, God created man and woman to live together. So we too must have a partner to live in this world. I hope that you will choose me as your partner.

Please let me know if you have any other plan in your future in your reply.

With best compliments, I remain,
Yours sincerely,
Your friend,
Ganjak Marak.

*Reply:* Chokagiri. 9th, Dec. 1955.

Dear friend, Ganjak Marak,

I have received your letter and I like to let you know that I have no idea of choosing a wife for myself yet. Therefore, I would like to advise you to try someone else instead of me. I am intending to go for further study and afterwards I have to support my own parents. Kindly excuse my inability to take you as my wife.

With best wishes,
Sincerely yours,
Roprakangjil Sangma.

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[1] I tried to find whether any couple might have kept some original letters after their marriage, but I unfortunately failed to find any. But I happened to know a man from a neighbouring village of Rombagiri, whom the people regard as a good writer as well as a narrator of old Garo stories. He willingly agreed to produce for me a set of typical letters of the Garo courtship. These are the letters I present here. The Christians of Rombagiri highly appreciated them, saying they were exactly the same style as theirs, but rather more beautiful than the letters which they used to write. The English translation was done by one of the Garo intellectuals at Tura. 126 584

19: Nakane K-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

II.

Rombagiri. 10th, Dec. 1955.

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Dear friend, Roprakongjil Sangma,

I have received your letter, dated 5th, inst. . I am very sad, you have not shown any intention to have me as your wife. I request you once more to consider this matter. I understand that there is no other man better than you who could be my husband, from my father's words. You are so capable in managing affairs and working in the field. I am a helpless girl, without your protection, it is very difficult to carry on my life. I shall obey all your orders. This is my duty. I have no property, I am poor. Although I am in such a position, if you consider taking me as your wife, I shall be very grateful. But if you do not consider this matter and do not take me, I shall be in great sorrow. I shall be nowhere.

Expecting your kind reply, with best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Ganjak.

*Reply:*

Chokagiri. 13th, Dec. 1955.

Dear friend, Ganjak,

I have received your letter, dated 10th, inst. . I have read all what you have written. But I am in difficulty to take you as my wife, because I have no property or education. Your family is big. I don't know how to work. If you have me, you will lose all your property. There will be many difficulties under such circumstances for both of us. Please don't write any more, give up your writing to me and try to have another better boy. It will be useful for you.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
Roprakongjil Sangma.

III.

Rombagiri. 20th, Dec. 1955.

Dear friend, Roprakongjil Sangma,

I have received your letter and I feel so sad about it. What you have written shows your indifference to me. I have already chosen you as my partner. It is impossible to think of another man. Though we are poor, if you come to my house, you would feel very much at home with my father, your maternal uncle, and my mother and uncles and brothers will be very kind to you. I shall do my best to serve you. Please think over it once again!

In the night when stars are shining in the sky, sorrow fills my heart, thinking of you. I dream of happy days when you come to my home and we work in the jhum field together. But I know you have no mind to take me. Oh! when we will be united! Please do make a fresh decision to make me your wife, rather than to continue to work for your parents. I have lots to tell you, but please let me stop here.

Your best friend,
Ganjak.

*Reply:*

Chokagiri. 28th, Dec. 1955.

Dear friend, Ganjak,

Just a few words to tell you that I was extremely glad to receive these three letters which you have written to me. I can now realise all the facts. So

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

I have decided to marry you. I shall come to your house on 2nd January 1956. 539
But please let me know whether your uncles, brothers and elders are really
agreeable to our marriage or not. I was very pleased with the way you wrote 584
to me. Please let me know when you desire to have our marriage ceremony.
In the moonlit night I think of you very much. Please keep to your
statements. I believe you are the only one with whom I can share my heart.
I am closing here with best wishes and sweet expectation.

Yours lovingly,
Reprakasogijil Sangma.

The period of a courtship may last for a month or so, or even for a couple of years. It depends on the circumstances of the young people. Young Christian boys usually receive several letters from different girls. For the girls, however, it is difficult at times to know whether unwilling letters from a boy are a real refusal or simply part of the process of courtship. They say that they have to write at least three times to one boy. 584

583 This peculiar aspect of Garo courtship is well known amongst many neighbouring tribes and peoples in Assam. Those who are patrilineal laugh at the Garo, saying "How cowardly the Garo boy is! He 584 cannot approach women by himself but must wait till girls come to him. The Garo are really matriarchal people. Women propose to the boys. It is women who choose husbands." This opinion is also held by foreign travellers who have visited the Garo Hills; but this impression is false and is based on ignorance of the details of the Garo social organization and the real meaning behind it. The Garo men express it themselves clearly by the following remarks: "A man must not approach a girl even if he loves her very much, but he may let fall a hint to the girl so that she will come to his feet. When he is caught by the young men of the girl's *makari*, he must run away at least three times, in order to show his pride as a man, and to give the impression that there are many girls luring him. He is not so cheap as to throw himself at a woman's feet. If a man married without running away, he would be regarded all his life as a poor fellow, who was afraid that no girl would approach him for marriage except that particular girl, he is such a poor man." Among Garo, the more a man refuses offers of marriage the more manly he appears.

This is not only due to men's pride; there is also considerable reasons behind it. Refusals of marriage help to establish the boys in a more powerful position after their marriage. Most Garo men have to go alone to a new village by marriage, leaving familiar kinsmen and the fields of their native villages. A newcomer, a newly-wed 583 bridegroom, is in a weak position as a result of uxorilocal marriage; in order to combat this situation, he endeavours to discover the girl's

583 weakness during his courtship. Then finally he decides to marry if
he likes the girl, but pretends to do so unwillingly and only at the
strong request of both her and her kinsmen. In the beginning of
[593] his married life, he behaves as if he came to his wife's house to protect
her and to make her house prosperous by attending to all her requests.
But she must obey his orders. By such careful manipulation the
newcomer firmly establishes his position in his new home. This peculiar
form of courtship is also indicative of the man's resistance to the
transition from his father's to his maternal uncle's circle. Courtship
amongst the Garo thus appears closely linked to the Garo social
structure.

### *Relationship between Husband and Wife.*

592 A well arranged and carefully prepared Garo marriage usually gives
the husband paternal authority in his new nok. The place of the
593 husband in the family is firmly established in the function of the nok.
[428] In the case of the nokrom, he is placed in the second seat among the
members of the nok, next to his father-in-law.[1] The Garo domestic
[606] family has strong cohesion and solidarity, centred upon the headship
of the husband (father), on the basis of residential rule and domestic
economy. In spite of the lineage grouping of the wife and husband,
there is a considerable degree of privacy and cohesion in each domestic
family. The residential autonomy is an index of the economic autonomy:
it is a single economic unit engaged in food production and
consumption, cultivating the field in common.

423 This norm appears very clearly, for instance, when the boundaries
of family shares in the new jhum field are being marked. Following
592 the day of the burning of the new jhum field, all the members of
each domestic family rush to the field in the early morning to mark
out their new portion for the coming cultivation. There may be
[578] many quarrels when marking the border lines between neighbours.
The husband, wife and children whose interests are entirely in common
claim their rights in the field to the fullest possible extent,
showing the strongest solidarity in relation to others. It is they who
must cultivate the field for their livelihood and prosperity in the
coming year. Thus the economic system acts as the strongest possible
bond in uniting them.

593 However, as already described, the central core of the nok, and

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[1] This is easily observed in their daily life as well as on religious occasions.
His mother-in-law is next to him, being his potential wife; she is not placed
before him, though she is his mother-in-law. This is quite different situation
[171] from the Khasi husband of an heiress, whose status is the lowest among the
members of his domestic family.

of the domestic family, is the husband-wife relationship (with the successors when it grows), rather than that of the parents and children. This husband-wife relation is firmly established under the patronage of both their local lineages. The wife, according to the promises made by her during the courtship period, subordinates herself to the newly-arrived husband. The power of the husband is, no doubt, checked to some extent by *chra* (wife's uncles and brothers) backed by their local lineage people. But this pressure from the wife's side is checked by the husband's lineage people, one of whom is his father-in-law. With such a balance of power on both sides, most Garo marriages are successful. The stability of the relationship of husband and wife grows more and more in the course of their married life. Divorces are very rare except in the very early period of the marriage. During my field work in four villages, I discovered among people whose genealogies I collected only two cases of divorce after the couple had established their own household.

In a domestic unit, the husband is given all the responsibility for the family affairs. The wife is subordinate to him, in spite of uxorilocal residence. In daily behaviour, we can easily see this relationship in action. The husband is the first person served by the wife. The husband, though it is very rare for him to do so, can beat his wife, if she acts against him unreasonably. It is permitted, as a matter of course, since he is the holder of authority in the family. However, cases of wife-beating are less common than among neighbouring patrilineal tribes, because of the nature of uxorilocal marriages; a husband must be conscious of the existence of his wife's *chra* always around him. Indeed he is always aware of their lurking shadow. On the other hand, if a wife beats her husband, it is a serious matter for the Garo. They think of it as a great insult to the husband and his lineage people. According to their information, as soon as such news is received by her husband's *machong*, all his *machong* people come to his wife's house. Parties of both *machong* gather together and a cow is sacrificed in their presence. They persuade the wife not to behave in such a way again and to reflect upon her action. Even if the situation is worse than this, and the couple want a divorce, the people of both lineages try their best to smooth over matters and usually succeed in doing so by making the couple conscious of their lineage responsibilities. With such a fuss going on, the husband and wife are made to appreciate their duties as representatives of their respective *machong* and to attach less importance to their personal likings. Personal frictions between a husband and wife are thus closely bound up with the relationship between the two *machong*. Once established, the marriage relationship becomes an almost inescapable institution until the death of one of the partners.

It is characteristic of the Garo marriage that an affectionate relationship of husband and wife is cultivated in the course of their married life. In fact, I often met very affectionate couples. For instance, I once gave a man a cup of tea and a piece of biscuit; his wife joined us a few minutes later. He drank half of the tea and gave the other half to his wife, together with half of the biscuit. This simple matrimonial affection impressed me a great deal. When I said this to my interpreter, he replied, "We are like this." It is quite true and I often found similar cases. On another occasion, when we happened to pass near the village whence my bearer had come, he suddenly shouted to a man, who was on top of a tree, watching for elephants, to ask whether his wife was well or not. As soon as I got the meaning of his shout through my interpreter, I smiled at him, as he was somewhat embarrassed, but he was very happy to receive news of his wife's good health. Garo husbands are indeed very kind and care very much for their wives. This seems to be an outstanding phenomenon amongst the various tribes in Assam. It is not correct to say that it is the natural outcome of uxorilocal residence and matrilineal succession, for we shall see later that the uxorilocal and matrilineal Khasi are unlike the Garo in this respect. It seems to be the moral code cultivated by the nature of the marriage which has resulted from the whole structural dynamics of their society.

The wife is fully dependent on her husband in her daily life. The promises made by both parties during their courtship appear as facts in their married life. But sometimes the wife shows that she is a member of a matrilineal and uxorilocal society where the relation of husband and wife is rather different from that among patrilineal tribes and peoples. For example, if the husband is not at home when a meal is ready, she eats it with her children without waiting for him, leaving his share wrapped in banana leaves. If the wife is engaged in feeding her baby when the husband asks her to bring some firewood to burn in the fireplace, she simply says "I cannot, I am engaged." Or, if the time is unreasonable, she may say "I am tired now, I am going to sleep." If the wife's remarks are reasonable, the Garo husband easily understands the circumstances and never forces her against her will. So far as my observation goes, neither the authority of the husband nor the subordination of the wife are ever exercised to extremes.

Of course, there are exceptional cases, as in any society. Among 30 houses in Rombagiri, 2 houses are notorious, because the wives keep their husbands under their thumbs. They often have quarrels. For instance, when the yield of the jhum field was bad, they started to quarrel in the field, blaming each other. The children, especially the daughters, sided with the mother. Villagers regarded it as a very bad and shameful state of affairs. I think, however, that while there are always similar cases in any society, these are certainly not typical instances of Garo society. 593

The higher status of the husband and the establishment of the paternal authority are based not only on the unique arrangement of the marriage, but also on the actual economic contribution of the husband as manager as well as worker. In fact, if a husband dies [613] and it is some time before his lineage people supply the next husband, the widow's house rapidly becomes economically poorer, owing to the lack of management and labour. In general, the Garo have a concept about men and women, which clearly appears in such a remark as "after all, women are weak, what can they do without men?" Another interesting remark is "If I am afraid of my wife, I shall tear my *gando*." The *gando* is the loin-cloth worn by the men. This is [291] considered their most important article of clothing—as usually their [558] only one. To be without a *gando* is the most shameful state for a man: they would sooner die. When they fight among themselves, they [598] declare at the beginning: "I am Marak, my father's *machong* is so-and-so [613] Sangma, my mother's *machong* is so-and-so Marak. If you defeat me, you shall have my *gando*," holding up a piece of cloth, a loin-cloth, in the right hand stretched upwards. In their houses, men occupy the centre of the room, while the women are allocated the lower seats near the entrance (see p. 40). Thus the men definitely maintain a higher status.

In addition to the foregoing, the case of the polygynous family should be presented here. A Garo husband may take secondary wives, 595 provided that he obtains the first wife's permission and her lineage people's consent. The former does not usually cause difficulties, when a husband is capable and energetic. Indeed, it often happens that the household of a prosperous man becomes too big to be managed by one wife, who in such cases is usually older, and she herself may press her husband to take another younger wife who can help her in her heavy domestic duties. The wife's *machong* may of its own accord supply [613] another woman or give its consent to him to take another wife from their *machong* or from another *machong*, whom he likes. A secondary wife mostly belongs to the same *machong* with that of the first wife: she may be a younger sister or a niece of the latter (as seen in Gobang's case, p. 48). But there are the sharp distinctions between *jikmamong* (first wife) and *jikgite* (secondary wife), as clearly understandable in the light of the structural working of the *nok* institution, already discussed.

The practice of this kind of polygyny should be considered in [587] relation to the rule of succession in the *nok*, which also often results in a kind of polygyny, the *nokrom* marrying his widowed mother-in-law and her daughter at the same time. I believe that this practice may prepare them socially and morally to have more than two wives

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

595 if the circumstances allow. In certain well defined marital spheres, the Garo individual is subject to the dictates of the *nok* and the lineage [171] function. Further, the Garo women are quite resigned to their husbands taking further wives, which, I think, is closely associated with the subordination to the husband—a unique feature among matrilineal peoples (cf. Khasi polygyny, pp. 159-70).

As a rule, secondary wives come to the first wife's house, whose head is the husband. In most cases, they live together very peace- [556] fully, dividing their domestic work. I once met a rich old man who possessed seven wives and who told me that he was going to have another. This, of course, is an exceptional case. However, one or two polygynists are usually to be found in any village. In my genealogical tables there are three cases of polygynists: Gobang and Rangmal of Rombagiri and Ramding of Rimsibara. They had extra wives besides marrying mother and daughter in the cycle of the *nok* succes- [556] sion. They were all influential and wealthy men as well as being *nokma* in the villages.

In conclusion, the high stability of Garo marriage is in contrast 171 with the unstable marriage of other matrilineal peoples, one of which 182 I will deal with in Part II. Usually a matrilineal system tends to 531 show strong solidarity in the matrilineal descent group. Therefore, there is always potential conflict between the marriage bond and the descent bond—which weakens the husband-wife relationship. No doubt, the Garo also have bonds of the descent group as do other matrilineal peoples, as represented in the Garo word, *chra* (see p. 75). However, the function of a descent group is limited. Instead, the function of a *nok* has more significant structural importance, and this is the core of Garo social organization. In the Garo system, the ownership of the property group and the authority of its controlling power can never be found in the same descent group, which certainly weakens the solidarity of matrilineal descent groups. Moreover, the property group, *nok*, is in fact established by the combination of two descent groups in perfect balance, as analysed in the previous sections of this chapter. The structural extension of this is also found in the composition of the village, the land-holding group. As manifested in their uxori-avunculocal marriage, neither to the Garo husband nor to the wife does marriage mean marrying into one of either group (the *nok* is located in the balance of two descent groups) unlike the marriages of in-marrying women in virilocal or avunculocal marriages, and of in-marrying men in an uxorilocal one. These are the structural implications of the stable marriage found among the matrilineal Garo. In this respect, the Garo system differs greatly from other matrilineal systems of which I will give a comparative analysis in the last part of this volume.

15: Nakane E-3 (1955-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi
Garo AR3

CHAPTER III

# SOCIAL CHANGE IN VILLAGES NEAR THE PLAIN

In this chapter I shall discuss the significant aspects of social change, and of structural change in particular, which occur in the frontier Garo community—the newly-formed villages on the southern slopes of the Hills near the plain of Bengal. 159

The bulk of the Garo population have lived in the interior of the Hills for centuries. The Garo who occupy the northern slopes of the Hills, together with those in the Assam Valley, are also considered to be inhabitants as old as those in the interior Hills. They are said to be the descendants of those who remained in these areas during the migration of the Garo tribe that originated in the north—according to their legends, they migrated from Tibet through Cooch-Behar, stayed for a time in the plain near the present Gauhati, and finally reached to the present Garo Hills. The southern slopes of the Hills are therefore the frontier of the Garo population, and indeed, as far as I can tell, most of the Garo villages in these areas seem to have been established during the last hundred years.

Political changes, coupled with an increase in population, resulted in the formation of satellite villages around a parent village, as described in the previous chapter. However, during the last few decades, the rate of increase in population has become too high to be accommodated in the interior Hills near the parent-villages. According to the *Census of Assam 1951, Garo Hills District Census*, the population of the district was 242,075 against 223,569 in 1941, i.e., it has increased by 8.28 per cent over this period, which is slightly less than half the percentage increase of 17.11 recorded in 1931-41 but larger than the 6.97 per cent of 1921-31. Such a rapid growth in population is a serious matter for a people whose economy is based on *jhum* cultivation, because this method requires an area of more than ten times 161 192 311

161 182 811 that of wet cultivation for the same population, and the technical arrangement is too simple to allow improvements in yield from the same amount of land. Thus, the serious shortage of land, coupled with the increasing population, made it imperative that the people of the interior should look for a new area in which to accommodate the surplus population. Most of the jungle areas in the interior were already exploited. Thus some of them had to move to a new site far away from their natal villages. This tendency resulted in the establishment of new villages near the plain. The regions along the foot of the southern slopes of the Hills, near the plain, had been left unclaimed, since the land was not sufficiently fertile for *jhum* cultivation, nor was it fit for large-scale wet cultivation owing to the fairly steep slopes—the plain dwellers, the Bengalis, likewise had not penetrated into these regions. But because of the pressure of increasing population in the Hills, the Garo had to settle even in these areas. Also on account of increasing population, these Garo, once settled near the plain, had to engage in wet cultivation in the available flat lands which could support a greater density of population.

182 61 621 These series of events naturally brought about social and economic changes. The main forces which led to a change in Garo organization can be summarized as follows: firstly, the shift to an entirely new area, far from the parent villages, inevitably resulted in the establishment of a kind of colonial village. The social rules and customs had to be modified; in particular, the affinity relation between two traditional *machong* was difficult to maintain, since such a village is usually composed of volunteers from various *machong* as well as villages. Thus the basic setting of their organization could not be maintained, and this resulted in a series of modifications at the organizational level.

182 263 623 621 Secondly, the change in agricultural technique from *jhum* to wet cultivation constituted the decisive factor in the Garo economic and social changes. So long as the village economy depends entirely on *jhum* cultivation, the village land is held in common by all the inhabitants of the village, represented by the *nokma*. However, once the villagers started wet cultivation, the field could no longer be held in common by all of them; it became the property of the particular family who first brought it under cultivation and continued to cultivate it.

Thus wet cultivation inevitably develops private ownership of fields. Wet cultivation differs a great deal technically from *jhum* cultivation. First of all, it does not require the cooperation of all the villagers, which is essential in *jhum*, particularly in the period of slashing and burning the jungle trees. Once cultivated, a wet field requires great care throughout the year and is cultivated every year by the same family. As a result, the cultivators develop a great

19. Nakane  E-5  (1955-1956) 1967  ART Khasi
Garo ART

A. Garo houses at [illegible] village

B. Garo house taken from back side at [illegible] village

[29]

[ P 80-A ]

142
291
302
516
854

C. Garo women of [illegible] village

D. Preparation of demon funeral altar at [illegible]

142
291
302
342
516
764

[illegible]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

attachment to their field, which is hardly ever found among the 182
cultivators of jhum fields, who cultivate a new piece of land every 243
year. The right to the field naturally falls to the family who reclaimed it. 423
So far as my own observation goes, conversion to a wet rice
field of a part (flat land) of the jhum field, which originally belonged 621
to the village, does not create opposition among the other villagers who continue jhum cultivation. This is because the jhum field usually extends over a vast area and jhum cultivation is usually done on the slope, not on flat land. Hence the conversion does not vitally affect the village economy. When a family in a village starts to convert a piece of flat land into a wet rice field, the people are usually not aware of the loss of land. The problem lies not in the actual commencement of wet cultivation itself, but in the gradual results which lead to social differentiation between the jhum cultivators and the wet cultivators within a same community, because of the different types of ownership.[1]

The observation of social change ascribable mainly to the first 121
factor is based upon field work done in Rinsibara village, and I have chosen Joshipara village as an illustration of economic change, the second factor.

### *Rinsibara*

Rinsibara is situated about five miles north of the bordering bazaar, 131
Dalu, in the plain. This area is located where the mountains cease
and the plain starts gradually. At Rinsibara, the major economy 621
was jhum cultivation. Twenty years ago, wet paddy cultivation was [182]
begun alongside the jhum cultivation. Rinsibara, established about
sixty years ago, was a community of 20 households in January 1956 [243]
(see List 4). I decided to choose this village because many of the [121]
present population were closely related to the people of Rombagiri. The *a'king* belongs to the Agitok and the *nokma* was Doljel Marak since the founder of this village was a man from Doljel, whose wife was Agitok. However, at present there are no members of the Doljel Marak in the village. Actually the majority of the population com-
prises people of Agitok and of Chambugong. The analysis of the [184]
formation of this village, as well as of the present composition of the inhabitants, reveals various aspects which are different from those of Rombagiri.

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[1] This is a very common phenomenon in many tribal areas in Assam [171]
bordering the plain. On this problem I did further field work among the tribes of Tripura State see Nakane, [illegible].

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

621
614

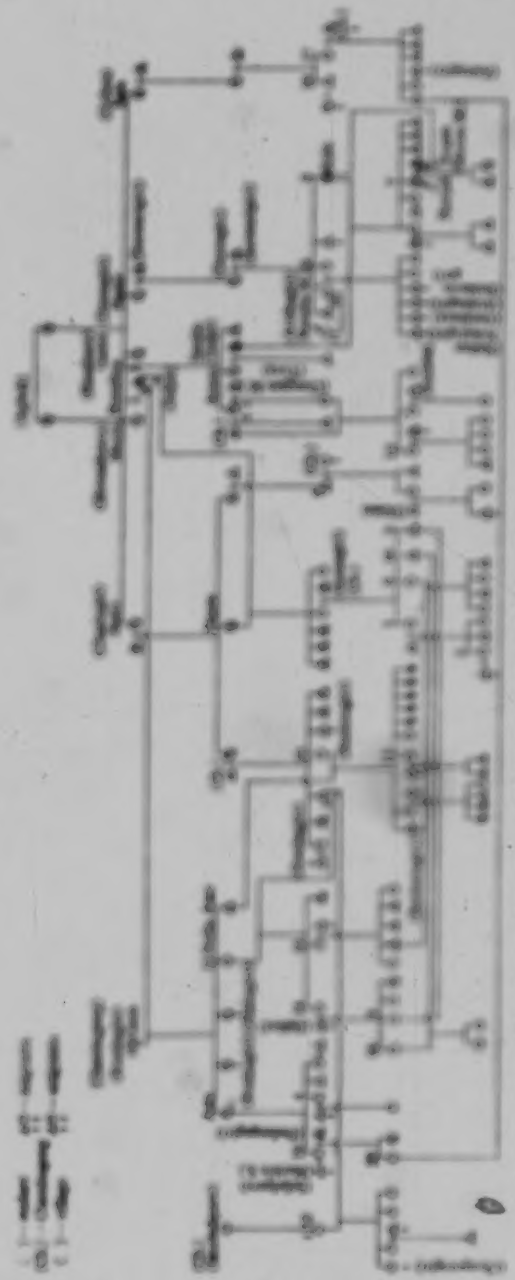

FIG. 8. — Genealogical Relations of Inhabitants of [illegible] in February 1956.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

List 4. *Household Heads and their Wives of Rimrikara*

103
231
241
243
311
551
614
621

| | *Husband wife* | *Mahari* | *From (village)* | *No. of sons* | *Wet rice field (by acres)* | *Jhum field (by pak*)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Dingran | Chambugong M. | | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| | Kanjak | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 2. | Winsh | Marag M. | Jadupara | 10 | 1 | 3 |
| | Mirin | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 3. | Sonsin | Agitok S. | | 1 | 1 | 3- |
| | Najak | Chambugong M. | | | | |
| 4. | Ronson | Agitok S. | Gasuphelagiri | | | |
| | Gasri | Chambugong M. | | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| 5. | Sherjan | Chambugong M. | | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| | Rongmi | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 6. | (Sanjen) | (Doljol M.) | | | | |
| | Rida | Agitok S. | | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| 7. | Jingse | Waram M. | | | | |
| | Nonajak | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 8. | Tangsn | Agitok S. | | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| | Sangri | Chambugong M. | Mymensing | | | |
| 9. | Jingget | Chambugong M. | Bolchagiri | 10 | 3 | 6 |
| | Rimji | Agitok S. | | | | |
| | Sejak | Dareho M. | | | | |
| 10. | Sanr | Chambugong M. | | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| | Wijanna | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 11. | Jangsn | Chambugong M. | Bolchengiri | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| | Senjak | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 12. | Dinjak | Chambugong M. | Bolchengiri | 8 | 3 | 3 |
| | Manjak | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 13. | Wingan | Agitok S. | | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| | Nalin | Chambugong M. | | | | |
| | Narmi | Chambugong M. | | | | |
| 14. | Jangmang | Dalbot S. | Sangsagiri | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | Genjin | Chambugong M. | | | | |
| 15. | Stang | Chirang S. | Wolnagiri | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| | Nanjak | Chambugong M. | | | | |
| 16. | Tanjeng | Agitok S. | | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| | Winsajn | Chambugong M. | | | | |
| 17. | Dinsin | Chambugong M. | Rongagiri | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | Walsep | Agitok S. | | | | |
| 18. | Gasren | Agitok S. | | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| | Gatin | Chidam M. | Sibagiri | | | |
| 19. | Sarman | Nokdam S. | Sojalpara | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| | Jibiri | Chambugong M. | Rongagiri | | | |
| 20. | Rangrak | Agitok S. | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Songjak | Chambugong M. | | | | |

*Note:* 6. Sanjen died and Jingse (7) is the successor of Sanjen (see p. 84).
*A quantity of seed.

173 The founder of the village was named Ramding, a Doljel Marak.
614 He married Muchi whose *mahari* was Agitok Sangma of Shanshapara
621 village near Tura. He had four wives altogether including this first
wife:

622

| *Name of wife* | *Mahari* | *Born at* | *Married at* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Muchi | Agitok | Shanshapara | Shanshapara |
| 2. Gadak | Agitok | Shanshapara | Shanshapara |
| 3. Gosan | Chambugong | Rombagiri | Rimsibara |
| 4. Naren | Agitok | Chasingiri | Rimsibara |

The second wife, Gadak, is the daughter of the younger sister of the first wife (Muchi)'s mother, and the fourth wife, Naren, is Gadak's elder sister's daughter (see Fig. 8). After his marriage to the second wife, Ramding came to this site and founded the new village, Rimsibara. Some time later, Gosan visited Rimsibara, accompanied by her parents from Rombagiri, and fell in love with Ramding (note, Ramding and Gosan both belong to Marak, though they are of different *mahari*!). After her parents left, Gosan remained at Rimsibara as the third wife of Ramding who later took a fourth wife, Naren.

Ramding's daughter, Amon, whose mother is Gadak (the second wife), became *nokna*. She married Ramding's classificatory sister's son (note, a cross-cousin marriage for the succession of *nok* of *nokna*). This *nokrom*, Sanjin, was the second *nokma* of Rimsibara. When his wife, Amon, died, he was given a woman, Robi, from the late wife's *mahari* people. This woman, Robi, is the present *nokma*. When Sanjin died, his *nokrom*, Jingan, married his *nokna*, Nonjak (Robi's daughter). According to their rule, Jingan should have married the widowed Robi, his wife's mother. However, he refused to cohabit with his mother-in-law and thus could not act as *nokma*. Temporarily, therefore, Robi is recognized as *nokma* by the villagers. (I have already mentioned this case in pp. 47-50.)

Jingan belongs to the Maron Marak, not to the Doljel like Ramding and Sanjin. Sanjin's *mahari* had failed to supply his successor. Therefore Jingan was taken as the *nokrom* since he was a Marak, though Maron not Doljel. *A'king* (the right of marriage—see pp. 27, 47) is still held by the Doljel *mahari*, who are attempting to make the *nokma* of the next generation a Doljel man. However, in such newly-formed villages the arrangement between the two *mahari* is not well followed.

614 In cases other than that of the *nokma*, the genealogy of Rimsibara
621 shows that marriage relations are not maintained between the Agitok and the Doljel. Moreover, there are no living members of the Doljel *mahari* at present in Rimsibara. In place of this, Chambugong and

Agitok marriages are common. Out of 40 married men and women, 614 34 belong to the Chambugong (women-10, men-7) and the Agitok 621 (women-10, men-7). Combinations of Chambugong and Agitok comprise 13 out of 20 couples (these numbers refer to the head of each house and his wife, see List 4). The Agitok—the descendants of Ramding's second and fourth wives, including other members of the same *mahari*—and the Chambugong from Rombagiri—the descendants of Gaun, the third wife of Ramding—form the main population of the present Rinsibara. They have a marked tendency towards village endogamy. Since Rinsibara is a totally new village, it has no firm

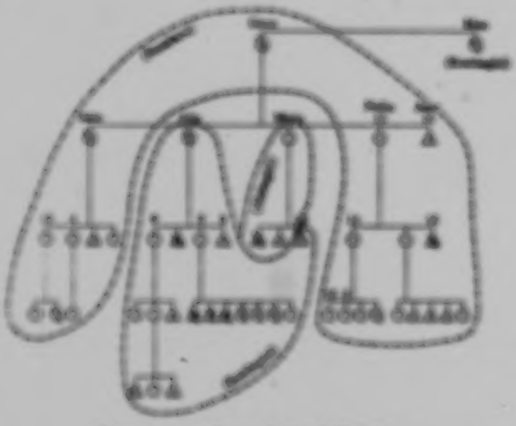

Fig. 9. — Genealogical Relations of Rombagiri and Rinsibara.

foundation economically and socially upon which to establish a moiety arrangement, such as we observed in Rombagiri.

In actual fact Rinsibara was formed by colonies of the Shomahapara 173 and the Rombagiri. The process of colonization appears clearly when we combine the genealogical data of Rombagiri and of Rinsibara, as 614 shown in Fig. 9. Gaun herself and the next generation still have a 621 close relationship with the Rombagiri people. Gaun had four daughters and a son from Ramding; the second daughter married Gobang 628 *kokor*, then *nokma* of Rombagiri. The third daughter went out to Alabagiri. However, the first and fourth daughters and the son remained at Rinsibara; most of the present Chambugong people are their descendants. Not only these descendants but many of the villagers think of Rombagiri as their homeland, since a number of them are related to Rombagiri people through kinship or affinal ties. In fact many of them visit Rombagiri. My field work was carried out 123

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15: Nakane K-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

123 with considerable ease in this village, because I knew all their relatives in Rombagiri and the villagers were very pleased to hear from me news of Rombagiri. I am not able to present such data for Shomsha-
582 para, which I did not visit. In any case, in Rimalbara there are many
614 members of the Agitok and the Chambugong of both sexes, resulting
621 in a tendency to marry between the two, thus making feasible to practise cross-cousin marriages among members of the same village.

This colonial village has not only a tendency towards endogamy
166 but welcomes also various villagers who seek new land. The composi-
621 tion of the population includes people who came from various villages
[103] as illustrated in the following list.

List 3.

| Name of village | Immigrants<br>Men | <br>Women | Emigrants<br>Men | <br>Women |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Alabagiri | | | | 1 |
| 2. Asiragiri | 1 | 1 | | |
| 3. Atishagiri | | 1 | 1 | |
| 4. Baramagiri | | | 1 | |
| 5. Bolchigiri | 2 | | | |
| 6. Boldoringiri | 2 | | 2 | |
| 7. Borongiri | 1 | | | |
| 8. Chongpotogiri | | 1 | | |
| 9. Damla | | | 2 | |
| 10. Dedenggagiri | 1 | | | |
| 11. Dokdongiri | 1 | | | |
| 12. Gnengkolbagiri | 1 | | | |
| 13. Joshipara | 1 | | | |
| 14. Mecholpara | | 1 | | |
| 15. Molmigiri | 1 | | | |
| 16. Mymensing | | 1 | | |
| 17. Nalten Nokatgiri | 1 | | | |
| 18. Ontabara | 1 | | 2 | |
| 19. Rombagiri | | 1 | | 1 |
| 20. Rondigiri | 1 | | | |
| 21. Sampagiri | 1 | | | |
| 22. Sikagiri | | 1 | | |
| 23. Sdjelpara | 1 | | | |
| 24. Tura | 1 | | | |
| Total | 17 | 7 | 8 | 2 |

*Note:* The figures record the movement of population in Rimalbara over the last thirty years. These villages are scattered over a vast area from Dalu to Bagmara, Rombagiri, Tura and down to Dalu through Rimalbara. These figures were collected by myself through village genealogy.

582 There are twenty-four villages with which individuals of Rimalbara
621 have had marriage relations over the last thirty years; 17 men and

7 women came into the village and 6 men and 2 women left it; immi- 582
grants are in the majority: 24 immigrants against 8 emigrants. The 621
majority of the fluid population is male, which shows that uxorilocal
residences predominate in this case as in other Garo villages. Thus [184]
the composition and the genealogical table of the inhabitants show
typical characteristics of a colonial community of the Garo. The
traditional arrangements between two particular lineages based on
the *a'king* are distorted.

The analysis of the genealogical table (Fig. 8) reveals, too, that 182
certain traditional rules concerning marriages are not strictly followed.
For instance, amongst orthodox Garo like those of Rongdugiri, more 582
than one marriage relation is avoided between two families; one's 621
sister is forbidden to marry one's wife's brother, and the brother is
also forbidden to marry his wife's sister. However, the people of
Rimalbera are not aware of this rule; we can find such relations in
the genealogical table of Rimalbera, as in the cases of marriage (22)
and (23), and those of (5) and (16) in Fig. 8. These facts must be
attributed to the nature of such a village where it is difficult to maintain the traditional Garo organization based on *a'king*; and accordingly
the *a'kim* and *nok-chamoi* arrangements have little significance. In
such a situation, the matrilateral cross-cousin marriage based on the
*nok* succession has also to lose its functional force. As a result, there
are only general cross-cousin marriages in practice, so that avoidance
of brother exchange naturally ceased to be. (See pp. 52-53.)

Again, we should not forget the case of the marriage between 182
Ramding (Dalisi Marak) and his third wife, Gaon (Chambugong
Marak). Marriage within the same *chatchi* is regarded as a great sin 582
amongst the orthodox Garo; where such practices occur a considerable 614
fine is exacted and the culprits are usually expelled from their village. 616
This rule is not so strict in the colonial villages. During my trip,
I also found some marriages of the same *chatchi* (but not the same [684]
*machong*) in the colonial area. Their moral concepts are much less
exacting in the case of such marriages. They accepted it, saying
they are not of the same *machong*, though they do not appreciate the
finer points involved. However, the last line, i.e., the marriage
between the same *machong*, is strongly opposed even amongst these
villagers.

This relaxing of the social rules is really associated with economic 182
changes due to colonization and the application of wet cultivation. 184
The people do not entirely live on *a'king* and the *a'kim* concept no
longer works systematically in these areas. These are the main reasons 621
why the social system is losing in the colonial areas its dynamic
compact nature.

### *Joshipara*[1]

178 184 243 621 [191] Joshipara provides an illustration of more radical changes in the Garo social system, particularly for economic reasons. Joshipara is situated three miles southeast of Rimsibera—closer to the plain. It is quite an old and large village for this area, the number of households amounting to about 70 (Jan. 1956). Its economy is similar to that of Rimsibera; wet cultivation is practised alongside jhum cultivation. However, some features are different from those of Rimsibera. First of all there is more flat land than at Rimsibera, so that wet cultivation is practised on a much larger scale. A more significant difference is that in Joshipara a certain number of households are entirely dependent on wet cultivation, while the rest rely only on the jhum field; in Rimsibera almost every household had a jhum field as well as some wet paddy fields.

178 184 243 621 771 [795] [870] One-third of the population of Joshipara (20 households) practises wet cultivation; this same group is also differentiated from the others in forming the Christian population. In 1908, one of the villagers (a man) was converted to Christianity which spread slowly in his extended families through the channels of kinship. The Government Lower Primary School was established in the village in 1912. That same year, the man who had become the first Christian started the wet paddy cultivation, copying its technique from Gurkha farmers living near the border. In general, among the Garo "to become Christian" means "separation from all the traditional ways of living." This attitude often results in an antipathy against all aspects of the old culture. For instance, as soon as a person becomes Christian, he starts to build a new house in modern style and destroys the drums and ornaments to which he used to be greatly attached. [291] [797] This change of attitude, in practical terms, is a fertile field for the acceptance of a new culture, for example, missionary education, wearing shirts over the naked body, etc.[2] In this case, the acceptance of the technique of wet cultivation must also be encouraged by such an attitude.

182 243 423 621 Whether Christian or not, those who changed their vital economy to wet cultivation had to face considerable difficulties which forced them to seek an alternative solution by changing existing rules. Those who established private ownership of land by wet cultivation, abandoning their rights on the village jhum field, are practically cut off from the village economic organization centered upon the *a·king*. This

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[1] Joshipara was selected as one of the areas of the Agriculture Irrigation Project, the Government of India, 1954-55.

[2] Aspects of social change due to Christianization among the Garo were dealt in my earlier paper (Nakane, 1958).

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

means that their descendants cannot claim their shares in the village 182
jhum field. In this situation, the traditional succession rule in private 243
ownership faces significant difficulties in the following manner:

According to the traditional rule, the *nokna* is the successor to the 423
property. When this rule is applied to the new situation, the wet 621
land is to be inherited by the *nokna* undivided, leaving no share for
the other daughters. While the *nokna* enjoys her father's acquired [428]
property, wet land, other daughters have to face after marriage a
serious economic situation, since they have no share of the wet field
nor have they a share of the village jhum field, being cut off from
the economic organization of the village, based on the jhum. Thus
considerable economic unbalance is created among the descendants.

The problem does not concern only the *nokna* inheritance, but also 182
the *nokrom*ship. Though the wet cultivators are cut off from the 243
village economic organization, they still keep close kinship relations
as well as affinal relations with the rest of the members of the village, 423
including of some other villages, amongst whom they choose their
*nokrom*. Now the families from whom their *nokrom* comes are not 428
always in the same economic situation as those who practise wet
cultivation—they might be jhum cultivators. One can easily imagine
the condition that will develop when the private wet land is handed
over to the *nokna* and her husband, the *nokrom*, who does not know
how to cultivate it. The wet cultivators of Joshipara say that private
land must be bequeathed to their sons and not to their *nokrom*.
Because the son has worked with the father in his field, the father is [593]
glad to hand it over safely to him.

The private ownership of wet land develops strong ties between 182
the father and the son who collaborate in the same field which is
owned by the family. Some no longer sleep at the *nokpante*, since 243
they are Christians. They are attached more to the father than 423
to the lineage men, including the maternal uncle. At the same time,
the father's attention goes to his sons who help him in his own field, 593
instead of to his nephew who works in another field which belongs to
someone else, or in the jhum field from which he is already divorced.
The father develops a great desire to see his son succeed to his land, as
he has worked with him and knows the technique of cultivation as well
as the value of the land. The relation between the father and son
becomes similar to that existing in patrilineal families. Indeed, the
paternal authority also increases, since his management and his labour
predominate over that of the other members of the family, particularly
in comparison with that of the women. The wet cultivators of Joshipara
say: "The daughters, being women, cannot do anything, except
rely on their husbands. To let them succeed to the land is a great
risk." They try hard to have a son succeed to their private land, 182
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182 rather than the *nokma* and the *nokrom*. Actually some of the families
428 in this area have already started to hand over the land to sons, against
the Garo law.

This tendency, no doubt, tends to break up the traditional Garo
182 social organization. If a father decides to let his son succeed to his
241 land, the son will remain at his father's house after his marriage,
most probably taking a woman from a neighbouring household which
423 also practises wet cultivation. Such a practice really marks a departure from the traditional organization, not only transforming from
61 matrilineal to patrilineal succession, but developing a new type of
428 organization which might be called an inter-family group organization divorced from the network of the social organization to which
621 they have belonged. The latter, especially, is one of the phenomena
occurring in many tribal areas in Assam.

Whether matrilineal or patrilineal, the important social change among such population is gradual development of a new type of a corporate group consisting of several neighbouring households, while a localized lineage or village organization began to lose its effective function as the important corporate body. Among those owned wet paddy fields, the land may be inherited in common by the sons, or divided amongst them, or it may be inherited by one of the sons while the other sons become cultivators for the successor. In any case, a set of households thus related through kinship and inheritance will form a socio-economic corporate group. In the course of time, there may be many such household groups, and among them marriage relations are established. According to my observation in Assam tribal areas, development of this type of new local groups and household relationships affects significantly to the traditional lineage or village organization based on jhum cultivation.

Trends, such as we have observed in Joshipara, suggest the latest stage in the series of changes undergone by Garo society, which will result in an entirely different organization of the community, in which the traditional network of Garo social organization will be destroyed. However, these economic changes have only been in operation over the last thirty years and only very recently have they started to undermine the traditional organization.

182 The adoption of wet cultivation seems to be a important factor in
184 social change occuring in tribal areas, as discussed here. However,
241 it is necessary to consider some other factors relevant to it. For
423 instance, in Rinsibara, in spite of the adoption of wet cultivation, the
degree of change was not so great as in Joshipara. The reason for
621 this might be found in the following: in Rinsibara, wet cultivation
began to be practised by every family, whether Christian or not
(Christians were very few, and there were no clear-cut groups of

Christian and of *songsarek*), at more or less the same time. As in 182
List 4, out of 20 households 7 did not possess wet fields; they were 184
members of much younger generations, whose wives were not *nokna*.
Older families possessed some wet paddy fields between 1 and 5 acres 243
in extent. However, in 1956, all of them still had jhum fields as well, 423
while among the people of Joshipara, there was a clear-cut division
between jhum cultivators and wet cultivators. It seems that the 621
degree of economic differentiation among the households within a village community is important. If every household has a similar economic activity the traditional organization can be fairly preserved, in spite of the adoption of wet cultivation. For instance, though I did not do field work among the Garo who live on the northern slopes of the Hills near the Assam Valley, and depend mainly on wet rice fields for their livelihood, I understood through different information that they have a very similar organization to the Garo of the interior Hills and keep to the basic rules to a considerable degree.

Another remark I should like to add here is that the social change 171
observed in Joshipara would never be so radical and so serious in 182
any other tribal areas of Assam in a similar situation. This is no
doubt because the Garo have had a matrilineal system in which social 184
change involves an entire structural change. The same analogy can 611
be applied to the rapid disintegration of the Nayar joint family in comparison with that of patrilineal Hindu joint family (see the discussion in Nakane, 1958/B and 1962).

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## *Part II*

# KHASI SOCIAL ORGANIZATION 000

[P. 93]

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CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

The homeland of the Khasi is the hilly country situated in the northeast of India and known at present as the District of United Khasi and Jaintia Hills, under the Assam State Government. The area is bounded by the plains of the Kamrup and the Nowgong Districts to the north, by the Cachar Hills and East Pakistan (District of Sylhet) to the south, and by the United Mikir and North Cachar Hills Districts to the east. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills are divided politically into two subdivisions, with headquarters at Shillong for the Khasi Hills, and at Jowai for the Jaintia Hills, respectively. The peoples of both subdivisions are called "Khasi" in a broad sense, and are distinctly marked off from other neighbouring tribes and peoples by language and social structure. The population of the Khasi in the District is 363,599 (*Census of India, 1951, Assam*). Their language belongs to one of the Mon group of the Austro-Asiatic family to which the Munda in central India also belongs.[1] 101 [636] 161 197

Though all Khasis share fundamentally the same language and social structure, their culture, dialects, economy, social usage, and political organization vary greatly, owing to the ecological and politico-historical differences among them. The United Khasi and Jaintia Hills are much higher than the neighbouring Garo Hills. The plateau of the Khasi Hills ranges from about 5,000 feet to 6,000 feet, of which 619 101 193 197

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[1] The *Census of India, 1951, Assam*, makes the following remarks on their language: "Their nearest kinsmen have been discovered to be the Palaungs, a tribe inhabiting one of the Shan States to the northeast of Mandalay on the middle Salween. Later the relationship of the Khasi language has been traced not only to the Mon-Khmer language, but also to the Nicobarese and several dialects spoken by some tribes in the Malay Peninsula. In Assam, this special form of speech is only found in the Khasi and Jaintias while nearly all the other primitive languages with which it is surrounded belong to the great Bodo family. The Khasi language is the only member of the Mon-Khmer family which possesses a grammatical gender distinguishing all nouns as masculine and feminine, and here also the feminine nouns immensely preponderate."

[P. 95]

199 197 the highest point is the Shillong Peak, 6,449 feet, covered with scrub, grassland and forests (mostly oak, rhododendron and pine trees). The Jaintia Hills are considerably lower, with much flat land; wet paddy cultivation is practised here and there where sufficient water is available. From the plateau of the Khasi Hills northwards to the Assam Brahmaputra Valley there is a gentle slope covered with thick jungle, and the southern slope towards the Bengal plain is very steep, so that

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UPLAND KHASI
JAINTIA

Map 6. — *Map of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills with Classification of Groups.*

199 197 the upland remained practically cut off from the plains until the middle of the 19th century.

619 Following the geographical and ecological differences, the five groups are segregated into fairly well-defined cultural areas, each developing a different economy and dialect:

[191 24]

1. The Jaintia[1] — associated mostly with wet rice cultivation.
2. The Khasi (upland Khasi) — practise potato cultivation with small-scale rice and maize cultivation.
3. The War — inhabit the southern slopes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (they are called geographically the Khasi War and the Jaintia War). Due to the heavy rainfall, the soil is the most fertile in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The Khasi War practise jhuming of which the main yield is millet. In the lower part of this area, pan-leaf, betel-nut, and orange gardens are cultivated. The Jaintia War practise wet rice cultivation like most of the Jaintias, as well as pan-leaf cultivation.

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[1] They are called also the Synteng or the Pnar.

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[illegible]

[illegible]

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[P. 96-A]

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G. Khasi women of [illegible] village

H. Young Khasi women of [illegible] village

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[P. 96-B]

13: Nakane C-3 (1955-1956) 1967 AB? Khasi AB?

c. The Bhoi — occupy the northern slopes of the Khasi Hills, covered with thick semi-tropical forests; they practise jhum cultivation. 619

d. The Lyngngam — inhabit the western border of the Khasi Hills, near the Garo Hills. They are said to be half-Khasi and half-Garo. Their economy is similar to that of the Bhoi.

These ecological and geographical differences correspond also to politico-historical differences. From the 16th century to 1835, year of the annexation of the Jaintia Hills to the Khasi Hills under the British administration, the people of the Jaintia Hills formed part of the Hindu Jaintia kingdom, whose capital was Jaintiapur, on the border of the present East Pakistan and of the Jaintia Hills. The capital, at one time, was moved to Nartiang near Jowai in the heart of the Jaintia Hills. The Jaintia Hills were administrated by twelve governors. Such a highly developed economic system as based on wet rice cultivation, must have helped a great deal in forming a kingdom adjoining the plain. Through the common economy and political organization with the Hindus of the plain, the Hindu civilization of the Bengal plain penetrated deeply among the Jaintias, who are matrilineal hill dwellers. 175 648

On the other hand, the Khasi Hills have remained outside the histories of either Assam or Bengal. They were governed by a number of petty native chiefs: there were twenty-five chiefs ruling the Khasi Hills when the British colonial administration was established there. Most of these chiefs belonged to the Siem clan. The history of the Khasi Hills had been shrouded in darkness till the beginning of the 19th century, except for fragmentary stories such as Khasi raids on the Sylhet people.

The development of the upland Khasi Hills started with the establishment of its headquarters at Shillong in 1874. Since then the features of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills have changed a great deal. What was once a small Khasi hamlet, untouched by the light of history, has become nowadays a busy modern town where many Khasi intellectuals live, mixing with various outsiders who are engaged in official work or in business. The British administration opened the way to missionary activities, especially that of the Welsh Calvinist Methodists who set up a mission in the Hills in 1841, almost at the same time as British political influence began to make itself felt in the Khasi Hills. Along with the political penetration from Cherrapunjee (1833) to Shillong, missionaries established many institutions, including churches, schools and hospitals, etc. Christian education, bringing with it the promise of clerical positions, attracted young Khasi a great deal; and the majority of the upland Khasi have been converted to Christianity. They have become the modern intellectuals of their people. 178 668 797 [891 745]

177 Besides these political and religious changes, there have been very
178 important changes in Khasi economy, particularly by the spread of
potato cultivation. Potatoes were first introduced into the Hills in
244 1830 by Mr. David Scott. Since then, the upland Khasi Hills have
been completely planted with potatoes. This grassland seems to be
very easily adapted to potato cultivation; it spread so rapidly and
successfully, becoming basic economy of the people, that they hardly
remember life without potatoes. Information is very scanty on what
was the major cultivation before the potato. However, we may
surmise that they must have practised jhum cultivation as do the
present people in War and Bhoi. Nowadays, there are no jhum fields
in the uplands as there are practically no forests with which to make
jhum fields. There must have been a long period of jhum cultivation, which resulted in recent ecological changes in the uplands
through the exploitation of the jungle. This hypothesis might
be supported by the existence of big timbers in old buildings in
the Khasi Hills, as well as by the present economic techniques of
the people.

177 The present potato cultivation is also a kind of shifting cultivation
244 like jhuming, with a rotation from three years to five years. The
uplands are covered with grassland, and sometimes with scanty pine
241 trees which were also introduced by the British. For potato cultivation, the Khasi first cut branches from these pine trees, and the
grassland is cultivated by the small Khasi hoe. They root out grasses
with earth attached about three inches in depth and one foot square.
These pieces are turned onto the cultivated surface, where fallen leaves,
branches and wild grass have been spread, in such a way as to keep
a space between the ground and the turned up clods of earth. The
field in which the potatoes are to be planted is entirely covered in
this way. The grass and leaves are set on fire in one corner of the
field and this fire spreads through the middle spaces and burns all of
the grass and branches, thus converting it into excellent manure.
The potatoes are planted afterwards. Two crops of potatoes are raised generally in a year. The following year the field is shifted to
another grass-growing area, leaving for a few years the last field to
grow another crop of grass. This is a type of small-scale jhum cultiva-
178 tion. This example of the present economic method suggests that
the Khasi had been jhum cultivators before potatoes were introduced.
244 It might be indicative of the last stage of jhum cultivation when the
[241] forests are completely exhausted. Before the potatoes, they must
have grown yams, maize and millet more or less in the same manner;
these items are still cultivated on a small scale along with potatoes;
the yield must be very low as compared with that of the War areas,
obtained through the exploitation of land. In the uplands, pan culti-

vation is impossible because of the cold climate. In the past, Khasi 178
economy must have remained at a very primitive stage. 244

Potato cultivation has been much encouraged along with the de-
velopment of Shillong and the opening of the motor road to Gauhati 178
from Shillong after the Independence of India when Shillong became 433
the seat of the Assam Government, as well as the capital of the Khasi- 369
Jaintia Hills. Shillong has become an important trading centre, where
big merchants collect the harvests of potatoes in exchange for rice, 244
clothes and various other goods from the Assam valley. These changes 439
have introduced the Khasis into an active commercial economy which
again has brought about various changes in their social life. Recently 491
coal excavations have started in the upland Khasi Hills, and many 439
Khasi become miners. 316

Thus the history of the Khasi Hills during the last hundred years
has changed a great deal the picture of the Hills. However, dark 178
corners still remain in Bhoi, War and in the area bordering on the
Garo Hills. These have been kept in a vacuum between the Hindu 184
civilization of the bordering plain and the modernization of the uplands
centred in Shillong. In these areas, the people are still practising
primitive jhum cultivation. I have chosen two villages in War located in one of these area as subjects of my major field-work.

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CHAPTER II

# VILLAGE COMMUNITY

As models of a Khasi village community, I have taken my data 121
for the discussion presented in this chapter from two villages situated
in the Kadashinong area, Sohkyndiah and Kongton, with comparative
data from Shella and Jatinga villages.

Sohkyndiah and Kongton are situated in one of the most secluded 621
spots of the Khasi Hills and the economy is shifting cultivation, with
millet as its main product. Only a few Christians are found; most of 771
the population are pagans. Shella is situated on the southern border
of the Khasi Hills, adjacent to Pakistan. Jatinga is in the North [101]
Cachar Hills, surrounded by patrilineal tribes, such as the Zemi-Naga,
the Kuki and the Cacharese. The economy of both villages is pan-leaf [245]
and orange cultivation. In Shella, Hindu, Christian and pagan are
found among the villagers almost in the same proportions, while the
Jatinga villagers are all Christian. The two Kadashinong villages, 184
Shella and Jatinga, differ from one another not only in their religious 621
and economic aspects, but in overt culture, dialect and political organization as well. (Additional information concerning Shella and Jatinga is given in Appendix.) Shella and Jatinga are unique among
Khasi villages and quite sophisticated, having been developed under
a trading economy, with considerable contacts with other peoples,
including Hindus. I selected these villages in order to ascertain how 121
far the structural principle which operates in the Kadashinong villages
can be found to act also in totally different economic and environmental situations.

## I. SETTING AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF SOHKYNDUH AND KONGTON

361 Sohkynduh and Kongton are villages of the Kadashinong,[1] one of
692 the areas under the Cherra Chief. The Kadashinong is situated on
[131] the southern slope of the Khasi Hills, in what is called War country.
These two villages are situated at the farthest point from both Shella,
the centre bordered by the plain, and Cherrapunjee, the seat of the
Cherra Chief, one of the centres of the upland Khasi Hills. The people
184 at Cherrapunjee say that these villages are one of the most backward
121 parts of the Khasi Hills. They correspond to Rombagiri in the Garo
[171] Hills, as they lie in the innermost parts and more traditional economic
and social settings have been preserved there than in other villages.
These are also the reasons why I selected these villages as my field.

361 It is nine miles to Sohkynduh from Cherrapunjee, crossing two
deep valleys towards the east. Kongton is located at the heart of
[131] the mountain ranges, ten miles from Cherrapunjee, towards the northeast.
[487] It is about twelve miles from Sohkynduh to Kongton, and
the way leads through one of the most difficult passes, where even
[162] villagers seldom travel. In December, 1955, Sohkynduh was a community
of 48 households (List 6), and Kongton of 62 households
(List 9). The settlements of both villages are clustered in the southern
depressions of a mountain, not far from the summit, a typical location
[134] of Khasi villages. Sohkynduh has poor soil, covered with plenty of
pieces of stones. The yield therefore is very poor. On the other
hand, Kongton, a much older village, enjoys fertile soil, and is one of
the most prosperous communities in the Kadashinong.

241 The major economy of both villages is shifting cultivation. We
have already seen, in the chapters on the Garo, the fundamental
technique of "Jhuming cultivation." The differences between the
423 Garo and the Khasi shifting cultivation are to be found in two aspects:
[171] one is the nature of the crops and the other is the type of landownership.
[241] In this area, the main crop is millet, while that of the Garo is
rice. Besides the shifting cultivation, the Khasi have pan-leaf gardens
and sometimes pineapple gardens, though on a small scale and not
in every household. The most important feature of Khasi shifting
cultivation is the development of private ownership. In the tribal
areas in Assam, such private ownership of the jhum field is quite an

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[1] Kadashinong is the name of a group of villages. Its literal meaning is "twelve villages," and it comprises the following villages: Sohkynduh, Rymmai, Mawbawein, Mawshiut, Mawmang, Kongton, Shyntiang, Krohiawhiar, Pdei, Tenshun, Nongpriang, and Diengsaw. (Khasi spelling follows the customary usage in Cherra State.)

exception. As I pointed out in the last chapter on the Garo, private 423
ownership started with wet cultivation. In Kongthong, there are no common (village) or clan land: every piece of land is owned by some household—more precisely it is owned by the woman, the head of a household, and managed by her brother or maternal uncle. The majority of households in Kongthong possesses land. Some of the richer 423
households lend the land while some of the poorer households lease it. 427
The rate for lease is Rs. 90/- per year for an area where one maund (80 lbs.) of millet seeds can be sown. As there is no acreage system, the measurement is by quantity of seeds, and since shifting cultivation requires a change of field every year, the rent is fixed by the year. The pan-leaf gardens, also privately owned, are never leased. When labour is required, the owner engages villagers, paying them Rs. 3/- per day.

In Sohkyndah, there are some lands called "clan land." Through- 178
out the history of the formation of Sohkyndah village, as reconstructed 423
from my data, can be traced some evidence of the evolution of land 614
ownership. The first inhabitants of Sohkyndah were said to be the people belonging to the Prarian clan (See Lists 6 and 7). It seems that when the Prarian came to this site, the land already belonged to the Dkhar clan of Rymmai village, five miles north of Sohkyndah. The present distribution of land ownership confirms this story. The jhum field belonging to Sohkyndah is divided into four sections according to the locality:

1. Lum Sohkyndah
2. Sohliang
3. Mawkhalai
4. Lumpalong

One part of Lum Sohkyndah belongs to the Prarian clan. The rest of Lum Sokyndah, Sohliang and Mawkhalai belong to the Dkhar clan of Rymmai village, the management of which is in the hands of Phrenning who came from Rymmai and married a woman of Sohkyndah. Lumpalong is owned by Sor (Kynshah clan, 32 of List 6) privately. The Prarian and Dkhar lands are used by their descendants respect-
ively. The people of other clans have to pay a rent of Rs. 80/- to [427]
use these clan lands. For the land which belongs to Sor, even the people of the same clan (Kynshah) have to pay rent since this land is privately owned. Thus the land of Sohkyndah belongs partly to particular clans and partly to a private owner.

Gurdon explains the existence of the clan land in the Khasi Hills as follows:

> "The clan lands originally, when population was sparse, were owned by families, but as the members of the family increased and a clan was formed, the lands became the property of the clan instead of the family. Such clan lands are properly demarcated by stone boundary marks. The manager of the clan

178 lands is the *kni* (maternal uncle) of the youngest daughter of the main family,
423 or branch of the clan), whose house '*ka iing khadduh*,' or last house, is the place
614 for performing all the religious ceremonies of the clan, and is also called *ka iing seng*. All the members of the clan are, however, entitled to share in the produce of any of the clan lands they may cultivate. No clan lands can be alienated without the consent of a durbar of the whole clan" (Gurdon, 1914, p. 88).

178 Theoretically we can assume that the land was owned by the family
423 (precisely, *iing*, the matrilineal descent group at the lowest segmenta-
428 tion, the structure of which will be discussed later) who first claimed
614 the right to the land, and was managed by the maternal uncle of the youngest daughter, the heiress entitled to the property. In course of time, with the increase of the descent members and with fission of the descent group, this land was inherited through the youngest daughter's line, but other members who had become segments of the main descent group had a right to use the land, so long as they remained in the same area. Newcomers who belonged to another clan were not granted the same right and had to pay rent. According to the information I was able to collect, even people of the same clan could not claim the right to use the land, unless they were the direct matrilineal descendants of the women who first owned the land. In this sense, the descent group solidarity at a lower level is much stronger than that of the Garo.

Therefore, newly possessed or purchased land is always owned by the individual family (*iing*, descent group). This Khasi conception of land ownership produces a picture of predominant private ownership of land, combined with high geographical mobility of the population (see p. 112). In such circumstances, it seems that even the land called "clan land" has been alienated or sold frequently, and has developed small holdings to suit the small segments of descent groups. In particular, when the entitled owner moved away to another area, the land was sold. For instance, in Sohkyndoh, the maternal uncle of Sor (mentioned above) purchased the land indicated above about ten years ago from a family of Siem Lyngngoh who left for another village. This land was originally purchased by the Siem Lyngngoh from the Dkhar to whom the land belonged as part of the clan land.

Under this system, clan ownership of land can develop only (1) when the members of the descent group remain in the same community for a considerable period and (2) when there is sufficient land to acco-
178 modate all members. I think these are the main reasons why land-
423 holding at present among the Khasi is found to be in small descent
428 groups—in one household as in Kongtong in most cases, and this I call private ownership. For the second reason, further explanation is

summary. The chances of acquiring a piece of land nowadays are small, except for very successful men, and usually the size of the plot is only just enough to maintain one household. When this land is passed on to the next generation, the youngest daughter will hold the title to it. This fact tends to exclude married older sisters from the right to use the land, since it is not sufficient for more than one household. Thus the ultimogeniture succession rule seems to have developed more sharply and to have encouraged limited inheritance in conjunction with the shortage of land. 178 423 428

This tendency creates unbalance in the economy of the households within a community. It is a usual picture in Khasi villages, for the bigger and well-built houses to be occupied by the youngest daughter's family, while the older sisters reside in poor huts. Youngest daughters are usually landowners, while their older sisters have often to become day-labourers after their marriage, unless their husbands are capable men, or their fathers wealthy enough to give them some share of their acquired property. On the whole, the variations at present between rich and poor are considerable in a Khasi community, in comparison with that of the Garo, where the economic condition of each household in a village is more or less similar. These differences are not only a matter of economic organization but arise from the nature of each social structure. 178 184 423 428 556 [171]

The economic and social patterns of Sohkyndah and Kongton are very similar, but their dialects are slightly different: my interpreter, who came from Cherrapunji, could work quite well at Sohkyndah, but at Kongton he found some difficulty, especially with the speech of the old men, and with their religious expressions. The head man of Kongton, who was quite accustomed to the Cherra dialect, acted as an interpreter for us. Such differences in dialect in the Khasi Hills are common phenomena; it is said that every valley has its own dialect. Differences are found not only in speaking, but also, to a certain extent, in culture and in social usages. 197 [124]

## II. VILLAGE ENDOGAMY

One of the outstanding features of Khasi social organization is the predominant tendency of endogamy on the level of the village, which contrasts with the structural orientation of the Garo village exogamy. This is closely connected with the distributions of clans and the nature of the descent groups. 582 621 [171]

The Khasi population consists of a number of *kur*, matrilineal clans, whose members consider themselves to be descended from a common ancestress. The members of the same *kur* have a common 614 [765] [769]

614 *maubo* (grave stone), in which the bones of all the dead members
[765] are buried. When the *maubo* becomes full, or some members move
[769] away to a considerable distance, they provide another branch *maubo*, creating a new *kur*.[1] Thus in course of time, every older *kur* occasionally branches off. Every branch *kur* has a different name, but can be grouped into a major *kur* thus forming a distinct exogamous group. Relationships among the minor *kur* of one major *kur* are usually known, or can be ascertained, so that marriages among these members are avoided. When the Khasi express this kind of group consciousness, they use the term *jai* (own people). For outsiders, it is difficult to know through the names of minor *kur* whether *kur* A and *kur* B are of the same group or not.

However, neither clan solidarity nor corporative activities are found among the Khasi, except in those clans which are considered of higher status, and maintain a functional position in the political or religious fields. Such are the Siem of the ruling clan and the Lyngdoh of the priest clan, etc. Among commoners like the villagers of Sohkynduh and Kongthon, the importance of a *kur* is confined to recognising a common ancestress, with a common *maubo* conception, which requires them to maintain a strict exogamous rule. But whether of major or minor *kur*, its members do not meet together or have a common leader. Actually major *kur* of which there are a considerable number all over the Khasi Hills, have no clear-cut geographical distribution. Each is scattered over a wide area, cutting across territory which includes several villages, and mixing with various other *kur*. Indeed, some of them are very widely distributed geographically and found in almost all regions of the Khasi Hills. A minor *kur* is also scattered over many different villages, though it shows more concentration than the
[621] major one. Consequently a village may be composed of small segments of more than a dozen different *kur*. Even these small segments of each *kur* found in a single village have little or no sense of kin-group solidarity, unless the members have quite close kinship ties. In many cases, though some members have the same *kur* name, their relationship may be distant, so that they cannot always reconstruct their genealogical relationship. In such a case their behaviour and attitude towards the same *kur* members and towards other *kur* members show no difference.

613 Individuals are not grouped actually under the name of *kur* but in a smaller group of matrilineal descendants from one great-grand-

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[764] [1] The Khasi cremate dead bodies: bones and ashes are usually kept in a spot near the youngest sister's house which is the centre of a functional descent group, for many years and finally placed in the *maubo* of the *kur*. They say that these bones are to be collected and replaced into the *maubo* every hundred years with a great ceremony. However, none of villagers are certain about the year when the last ceremony was held.

mother, for which unit the Khasi word *kpoh* is used. Such a group of matrilineal kin is usually confined to one domestic family or to a group of households, linked by direct extension of a main household. However, even this descent unit is not a single productive and consumer unit, though it may act as a religious unit, having common ancestral property. I shall take up this thread again at a later stage of my analysis. 613

621 Because of the lack of the functional lineage organization as a corporate unit, the village community becomes the significant unit on a higher level of organization than that of *kpoh*. This fact is supported by the high tendency to community endogamy which links every household of a village into a unit with considerable cohesion and solidarity. In fact the members of a village community are linked to each other in various ways by affinal or cognatic ties. 619 614

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List 6. *House-owners and their Spouses of Sohkyndiah*

| *House-owner* | *Kur* | *Spouse* | *Kur* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Ralo | Pohsnong | Saro | Prarian |
| 2. Shngiorh | Pohsnong | Nas | Riatam |
| 3. U Ralo | Prarian | | |
| 4. To | Prarian | Phoengrong | Dkhar |
| 5. Pho | Khongriah | Sar | Dkhar |
| 6. Deveh | Dkhar | Wan | Kaing |
| 7. Snoh | Khongshei | Majar | Khongsit |
| 8. Kosmai | Dkhar | Koshon | Kongjoh |
| 9. Onti | Dkhar | Majar | Khongsit |
| 10. Juid | Khonglam | | |
| 11. Jun | Khonsnidir | Uning | Kaing |
| 12. Mo | Khongsnidir | Kishad | Khongshei |
| 13. U nil | Khongsnidir | | |
| 14. Rupai | Khongshei | Seli | Shrieh |
| 15. Tngan | Khongmawpat | Tik | Prarian |
| 16. Step | Khongmawpat | Nowel | Kaing |
| 17. Phi | Khongsnidir | Phoin | Mawpat |
| 18. Khaila | Prarian | Siang | Masar |
| 19. Jop | Kaing | Syndro | Dkhar |
| 20. Khot | Shrieh | Lait | Khongshei |
| 21. Pro | Prarian | Mon | Khongshei |
| 22. Kam | Khonshei | Pion | Khongriah |
| 23. Leni | Prarian | Jam | Khongjiliew |
| 24. Shakmol | Khongngain | Jrop | Dkhar |
| 25. Jin | Khongjiliew | | |
| 26. Jemnud | Khonglam | Josio | Riahtam |
| 27. Kilo | Dkhar | Muta | Khonglam |
| 28. Phimai | Riahtam | Rang | Dkhar |
| 29. Jak | Riahtam | Babusing | Tyngsong |
| 30. U Jin | Khonglam | | |
| 31. Kheri | Shrieh | Biaing | Khonglam |
| 32. Sor | Kynshah | Josio (28) | Riahtam |

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| House-owner | Kur | Spouse | Kur |
|---|---|---|---|
| 53. Ko | Khongsit | [illegible] | Khongriah |
| 54. Phi | Khongjliew | [illegible] | Majaw |
| 55. [illegible] | Riahtam | Jon | Khongji |
| 56. Eli | Khongsit | [illegible] | Khongphet |
| 57. Eile | Khongsit | [illegible] | Riahtam |
| 58. Kord | Shrieh | [illegible] | Khongsit |
| 59. Ho | Khongsit | [illegible] | Mawpat |
| 60. Phen | Dkhar | [illegible] | Prarian |
| 61. Shngai | Khonglam | Joan | Prarian |
| 62. Ieitmon | Tham | [illegible] | Khongsdir |
| 63. Prinong | Khongsit | [illegible] | Khongngain |
| 64. Plah | Shrieh | | |
| 65. Lie | Prarian | | |
| 66. Libon | Kynshah | Syrlin | Dkhar |
| 67. Kvait | Tham | [illegible] | Kynshah |
| 68. Syndon | Shrieh | Juin | Khongriah |

*Note:* 1) 3, 13, and 50 are households the heads of which are men who have no wife or sister (mother, aunt) living with them.
2) Husbands of 10, 44 and 41 died, and 15 divorced.
3) Husbands of 26 and 50 are the same man (polygynous).

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List 7. *Numbers by kur of Individuals named in List 6.* L

| | House-owner | | Spouse | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | | |
| 1. Prarian | [illegible] | 1 | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 2. Riahtam | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 3. Dkhar | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 4. Shrieh | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 5. Pohnong | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 6. Kning | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 7. Khongsit | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 8. Khongsdir | [illegible] | 1 | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 9. Khongphet | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 10. Khongmawpat | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 11. Khonglam | [illegible] | 1 | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 12. Khongjliew | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 13. Khongngain | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 14. Khongriah | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 15. Tham | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 16. Kynshah | [illegible] | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 17. Khongjah | | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 18. Masar | | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 19. Tyngsong | | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 20. Majaw | | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| 21. Khongji | | | [illegible] | [illegible] |
| Total | [illegible] | 3 | [illegible] | [illegible] |

15: Nakane K-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AB? Khasi AB?

List 8. *Actual descent Links found among House-owners of [illegible]*

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| *House-owners** | *Kur* |
|---|---|
| 1. 18-21-63 | Pariat |
| 2. 8-65 | Pariat |
| 3. 28-29-59 | Riahtam |
| 4. 67-48 | Dkhar |
| 5. 21-48-44-58 | Shrieh |
| 6. 33-39-45 | Khongsit |
| 7. 38-57 | Khongsit |
| 8. 11-13 | Khongsdir |
| 9. 7-66 | Khongphei |
| 10. 16-23 | Khongmawpat |
| 11. 23-34 | Khongjliaw |
| 12. 37-46 | Kynshih |

*Note*: Figures correspond to that of List 6.

List 9. *House-owners and their Spouses of [illegible]*

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| *House-owner* | *Kur* | *Spouse* | *Kur* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Shro | Pohsnong | Lyon | Khongsit |
| 2. Klar | — | *(Mahalin) | Shabong |
| 3. Phesi | — | *(Sarli) | Majaw |
| 4. Rai | — | D(Sarli) (3) | — |
| 5. Syim | — | Skymna | Khongsit |
| 6. Khuñew | — | *(Sral) | — |
| 7. Shngain | — | D(Rarsit) | Sohkhlet |
| 8. Lyhoin | — | Julemsai (32, 20) | Majaw |
| 9. Deng | — | Khain | Riahtam |
| 10. Kyrin | — | *(Rohon) | Sohkhlet |
| 11. U Kynsai | — | D(Jat) | Khongsit |
| 12. Sed | — | Khien | Khongwir |
| 13. Tenghoi | Khongsit | *(Kheng) | Mynring |
| 14. Rilanis | — | *(Monglah) | Majaw |
| 15. Lili | — | Darung | Shabong |
| 16. Wish | — | Mrit | Dohphang |
| 17. Latom | — | *(Ring) | Shabong |
| 18. Langliang | — | Borna | Riahtam |
| 19. Rikamon | — | Sear | Pohsnong |
| 20. Mo | — | Julemsai (8, 32) | Majaw |
| 21. Klari | — | Nobar | — |
| 22. Thakeri | — | D*(Bit) | — |
| 23. U Sabur | — | *(Jing) | Shabong |
| 24. Iot | — | *(Khyllah) | Khongji |
| 25. Dngar | — | *(Lariang) | Khongngain |
| 26. Duro | Majaw | Iong | Khongphei |
| 27. Bah | — | That | Sohkhlet |
| 28. Homa | — | Shedar | Rangrah |

15: Nakane E-3 (1955-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi AR?

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| House-owner | Kur | Spouse | Kur |
|---|---|---|---|
| — | — | — | — |
| 49. U Shai | — | Phai | Khongngain |
| 50. Tunun | — | *(Rumjai) | Pohsnong |
| 51. Rinah | — | Jait | Khongwir |
| 52. Ring | — | Sirik | Sohphong |
| 53. Mais | — | Soh | Dkhar |
| 54. Pein | Rangrah | Khar | Shabong |
| 55. Iah | — | Rila | — |
| 56. Kyntiah | — | Hara | Shabong |
| 57. Tied | — | | |
| 58. U Thoin | — | Phan | Lyngdoh |
| 59. Pein | Riahtam | D*(Nora) | Tiling |
| 60. Rit | — | Sidor | Pohsnong |
| 61. Roman | — | D*(Pune) | — |
| 62. Rita | — | *(Shanbon) | Kyndiah |
| 63. Bilish | — | Shanaidah | Lyngdoh |
| 64. Gri | — | Kyrdor | Tiling |
| 65. Jonspam | Sohkhlet | Vein | Khongji |
| 66. Wam | — | *(Mahon) | Shabong |
| 67. Kror | — | She | Khongsit |
| 68. Hun | Shabong | *(Brien) | Rangrah |
| 69. Phe | — | Mian | Khongji |
| 70. Shu | — | Gaw | Khongngain |
| 71. Lopoin | — | D*(Nara) | Lyngdoh |
| 72. Rupe | — | Jaikongrai (8, 20) | Majaw |
| 73. Rohor | — | *(Bangit) | Khongsit |
| 74. Rolima | — | Pot | Majaw |
| 75. Lah | Khongji | D*(Kyrfah) | Khongphor |
| 76. U Phan | — | *(Syaid) | Myrsiang |
| 77. Tham | — | Tet | Shabong |
| 78. Dhoare | — | Dormo | Rangrah |
| 79. Syaid | Myrsiang | D(Phin, 76) | Khongji |
| 80. Syer | — | Kdeh | Khongrymmai |
| 81. Sar | — | *(Thaw) | Shabong |
| 82. Shih | — | D(Lar) | Majaw |

*Note:* 1) * = dead. D = divorced.
2) House-owners of 11, 23, 29, 58 and 76 are men, and the rest are women.
3) Husband of 8, 20 and 72 are the same man (polygynist).

List 10. *Numbers by kur of Individuals named in List 9.*

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| *Kur* | *No. of house-owners* | | *No. of spouses* | | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Women* | *Men* | *Men* | *Women* | |
| — | — | — | — | — | — |
| 1. Pohsnong | 11 | 1 | 4 | | 16 |
| 2. Khongsit | 12 | 1 | 6 | | 19 |
| 3. Majaw | 7 | 1 | 7 | — | 15 |
| 4. Rangrah | 4 | 1 | 3 | | 8 |
| 5. Riahtam | 6 | | 2 | | 8 |

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| *Kur* | *No. of house-owners* | | *No. of spouses* | | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Women* | *Men* | *Men* | *Women* | |
| 6. Sohkhlet | 3 | | 3 | | 6 |
| 7. Shabong | 7 | | 10 | | 17 |
| 8. Khongji | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 |
| 9. Mynriang | 4 | | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| 10. Khongwir | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 11. Buhphang | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 12. Khongngain | | | 3 | | 3 |
| 13. Khongshei | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 14. Diahar | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 15. Lyngdoh | | | 2 | | 3 |
| 16. Tding | | | 2 | | 2 |
| 17. Kynshah | | | 1 | | 1 |
| 18. Khongrymmai | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Total | 57 | 3 | 34 | 3 | 100 |

List 11. *Actual Descent Links found among House-owners of Kongtong.*

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| *House-owners* | *Kur* |
|---|---|
| 1. 1-7 | Pohsnong |
| 2. 8-9-12 | Pohsnong |
| 3. 13-18 | Khongsit |
| 4. 14-15 | Khongsit |
| 5. 17-25 | Khongsit |
| 6. 19-20 | Khongsit |
| 7. 23-24 | Khongsit |
| 8. 26-29-33 | Majaw |
| 9. 27-28 | Majaw |
| 10. 31-32 | Majaw |
| 11. 36-38 | Rangrah |
| 12. 41-44 | Riahtam |
| 13. 42-43 | Riahtam |
| 14. 45-46-47 | Sohkhlet |
| 15. 48-49-54 | Shabong |
| 16. 59-60-61 | Mynriang |

*Note:* Numbers correspond to that of List 9.

The data I collected in Sohkyndoh and Kongtong show that the number of households that can be included in a single descent group (actual kinship ties through female members) is strikingly small, as shown in List 8 (Sohkyndoh) and List 11 (Kongtong). The maximum number of households belonging to a recognizable descent group was four, and mostly two. Many households (19 households of Sohkyndoh; 25 households of Kongtong) which did not appear in List 8 and List 11,

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613 formed independent descent groups by individual households, for
which no traceable genealogical relation with any other descent groups
614 could be established, though some of them belonged to the same *kur*.
621 In Sohkynduh, the total 48 households were divided into 16 *kur*
(according to the house-owner), and in Kongton, the total 62 households
were divided into 9 *kur*, while the number of actual descent
groups amount to 31 in Sohkynduh and 41 in Kongton.

This fact, I presumed, indicated a considerable mobility of the
166 population of each village community. Hence, I tried my best to
178 reconstruct the historical alignments of these descent groups, both
from my genealogical data and with the help of the villagers' memory.
613 The result showed that the mobility of the population over the last
614 fifty years had been surprisingly great and complex. In Sohkynduh,
the Praian clan seems to be the oldest inhabitants of this village with
621 16 *kur* segments. Next came a family of the Ksing. The third wave
was a family of Khonglam, and the fourth, Siem Lyngngoh which
I mentioned previously (p. 104). The next were families of the
Kynshah, many members of which had left for Nonprian village after
a few years. The sixth wave was the Srieh family. All the above
movements took place before the great earthquake of 1897 which
shook Assam. After 1897 the movements became more intense and
complicated, and involved many families of various *kur*. The villagers
could not remember the order in which they came: there has
been continual coming and going even up to now. At present, the
Prarian, the Ksing, the Khonglam, the Kynshah and the Dkhar are
the older among the 16 *kur*. However, such migrations concern
usually a single family only, not a group of *kur*, and that is the typical
pattern of Khasi migration. Hence, families which have the same
*kur* name do not always indicate the same movements. The incentive
for such migration seems to be to get land better appropriated to
one's economic condition. Particularly, as I have already mentioned
elsewhere (p. 105), the shortage of land seems to encourage families of
elder sisters who have no share of property, to move to other areas
and look for land.

Thus, many households which make up the present village are
minor segments of different *kur*, or of the same *kur*, but they can
hardly trace their genealogical relations to one another. A migration
to a new village was not undertaken at random; it was mostly as a
result of information received from neighbouring villages, or from
those where friends or relatives had already settled in. Several neighbouring
178 villages usually dispose of more than one common market
613 where they can exchange information and developed friendships over
614 trading. The matrilineal kinship relation is no more important a
621 factor than any of the others mentioned above. Among the Khasi,

the matrilineal descent group has a distinguished function only when 178
there is common residence and common property. 613

In Kongton, among 9 different *kur* (List 10), Pohnong and Khonsit
accounted for the majority of the population, while the rest, seven 614
*kur*, were more or less of equal size. On the whole the population
seemed more stable than that of Sohkynduh. However, as in Sohkyn- 621
duh, actual descent groups amounted to 41, many of which have the [182]
same *kur* name but could not always establish genealogical relationship with one another; nor was there any functional cohesion. I failed to reconstruct the history of the formation of these descent groups: the villagers had no memory of their past except very fragmentary information which was quite insufficient to account for their present composition. They only insisted this was a very old village in comparison with Sohkynduh and other neighbouring villages.

While I was struggling with the villagers' scant accounts of their 182
past and fragmented kinship relations among the present households,
I was struck by the poorness of the villagers' genealogical memory 613
in comparison with that of the Garo. Suppose A, B and C, who 621
belonged to the same property-holding descent group three generations back: A and B being sisters and C being B's daughter. If B, including her descendants, moved away from the village two generations back, the present generation of A's and C's descendants would easily lose contact and knowledge of their genealogical relationship. This fact, on the other hand, illustrates some important aspects of the Khasi social structure: the kinship relation—matrilineal descent link—is not a significant factor beyond the scale of the household (property-holding descent group), and locality is more important than matrilineal descent for the formation of the Khasi community. Through the predominant practice of endogamy on the level of the village, the small segments (found on a level of a household or a group of a few households) of various different *kur* clustered in a village are linked by affinal relations each other, by which altogether form a well knit social organization of a village community. The cohesion and solidarity of the Khasi village community is strengthened by the local endogamy not by the localized lineage organization.

In fact, in contrast with the rather loose kinship relations which 602
link different households, the affinal relations link almost every house-
holds in the village, as shown in Fig. 10. The lines, ———, indicate 621
marriage relations between living members of households, and the lines, - - - - -, indicate affinal relations established through dead members of present households or through spouses' kinship relations at Sohkynduh, as in November 1955. In this way, except for one household (24), members of a single household are all linked together through affinal or cognatic ties. In some cases, the affinal relations between

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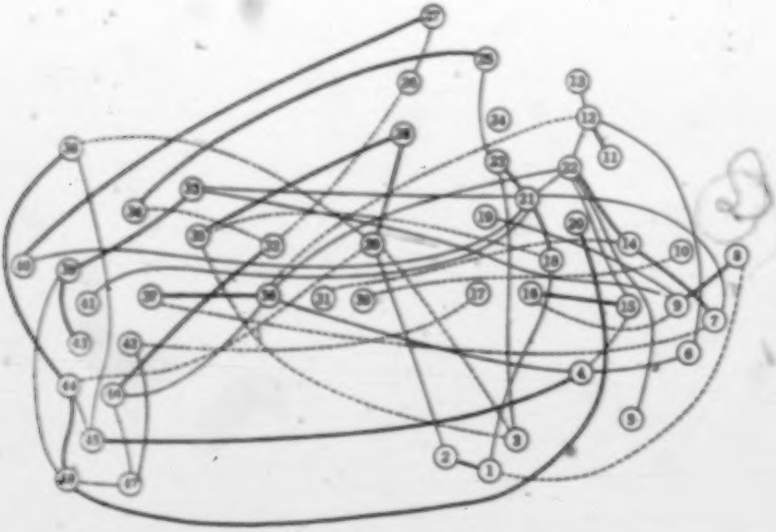

FIG. 10. — *Kinship and Household Location in Sohkynduh.*
—— Matrilineal kinships relations among household-owners;
—— Affinal relations (direct) among household-members;
- - - - Affinal relations (indirect) among household-members.

particular two families are not restricted to one, but may be accumulated two or three, though I omitted to indicate these in Fig. 10.

582 There are some extensions of marriage relations with members
591 outside the village. In Sohkynduh, out of 88 (48 houseowners and
61 40 their husbands) 13 men and 2 women came from neighbouring
621 villages. Owing to the predominant uxorilocal arrangement, those
628 who came in from outside the village were mostly men. By these members, five different *kur*, new to Sohkynduh, were found, as shown in List 7 (17-21). Most of these outsiders came from villages inside the Kadashinong, or villages no further than a day's journey there and back. This area might be called a secondary endogamous area, and includes more than half a dozen villages. In Kongton, 20 husbands and 3 women came from neighbouring villages by their marriages. The secondary endogamous areas of Kongton and of Sohkynduh are not the same but they overlap in certain places, the surrounding areas being centred on each village. There were, by December 1955, no instances of direct marriage between these two villages.

184 There are a few exceptions to local endogamy, such as those
582 individuals who have become Christians and are educated in towns
621 like Shillong or Cherrapunjee. They usually move to a town, seeking
[795]

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some clerical work. However, such instances are very rare in these
regions and few Christians are to be found among the people. So far 582
as my genealogical table accounts for, only two boys from Sohkynduh, 621
and one girl and one boy from Kongton, left for Shillong, and [771]
married there. In contrast to these exceptional cases in these villages,
in the upland Khasi Hills, there are considerable changes in the [178]
composition of a village with high geographical and social mobility
of population because of the spread of Christian education and urban
influence.

The people of the two villages say that marriages with outside 166
people were not formally practised, and were only a recent tendency.
However, the composition of the population of the two villages showed 178
extensive movements of population in the past (not to urban areas, 582
but from village to village). Such movement is attributed mostly to 621
migration by a family rather than by an individual on marriage.
This type of migration is clearly found also in the process of the [184]
formation of Jatinga village (see Appendix, Jatinga).

The composition of the village community and the social character- 582
istics of Sohkynduh and Kongton show very similar features of village
endogamy. They seem to be typical of the traditional pattern of 621
Khasi villages. Village endogamy is the intrinsic pattern among the 184
Khasis. This fact can be also observed to a considerable degree in
Shella and Jatinga.

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## CHAPTER III

# KINSHIP STRUCTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN VARIOUS FORMS OF MARRIAGE

### I. KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY AND SELECTION OF SPOUSE

The Khasi social structure differs greatly from that of the Garo; 601 and one of the important differential elements is revealed in their [171] kinship terminology. The Khasi kinship terminology does not show the structural significance of the marriage rules except for the basic distinction between own matrilineal kin, *kur*, and non-matrilineal kin, *kha;* this distinction serves to enforce the exogamous rule.

All members of Ego's generation, including both maternal and paternal cousins, are classed as *para* (sibling), and those of Ego's child's generation as *khun*. In these two important generations, the generation principle is the basic pattern in terms of marriage. Cutting across this principle, distinctions of sex (*ka* for female, *u* for male) and order of birth (old or first, young or youngest, sometimes middle is added) are to be found. For instance, *ka-para-kur* is mother's sister's daughter, *u-para-kha* is father's brother's (or sister's) son. Wife is *ka-lok*, and husband, *u-lok*. The youngest daughter is *ka-khun-khadduh*.[1]

Though the terminology of Ego's and child's generations shows the generation principle, the matrilineal structure is reflected in the following points apart from the distinction between *kur* and *kha*. 1) In the child's generation *(khun)*, the matrilineal nephew and niece are termed *pyrsa* as well as *khun*, signifying the sociologically closest members of the child's generation. 2) *Kñi* is the most important kinship term among the Khasi; it designates the head (and potential head) of the descent group, i.e. the mother's brother. The mother's [171] mother's brother is also termed *kñi*, just like among the Nayar the

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[1] For further instances, see U. R. Ehrenfels, 1953.

601 term *mama* for mother's brother designates as well mother's mother's [171] brother. 3) Terms for mother's sister *(kmie)* and father's sister *(ñia)* are different; and, needless to say, father's brother is called *kpa*, not *kñi*. 4) Mother's mother *(meirad)* is differentiated from father's mother *(meikha)*, though the grandfathers on both sides are termed *parad*.

582 As regards cross-cousin marriage, which, as we have seen, was an essential part of Garo social structure, the Khasi have no institutional 601 arrangements. The cross-cousin distinction is indeed found in the [171] Khasi kinship terminology. Among those who are called *para* (sibling), an additional term is applied to cross-cousins (both matrilateral and patrilateral). They are called *bakha*. However, this additional cross-cousin term should not be considered as indicating a preference [171] for cross-cousin marriage. This is structurally different from that of the Iroquois type discussed in terms of Garo kinship terminology, in which a prescrived cross-cousin marriage is involved. The term *para* (sibling) is more often used for them than *bakha*.[1] Actually, among the Khasi there is no preference for cross-cousin marriage; indeed there are even indications to the contrary, in that marriage with the mother's brother's daughter is not allowed during the lifetime of the maternal uncle. In the same way, marriage with the father's sister's daughter is not allowed during the life-time of the father.

582 In fact, the Khasi have numerous prohibitions of marriages between near kin on both paternal as well as maternal sides. The first and second parallel cousins are avoided. Those related to father within three generations are avoided. Within such a framework of marriage prohibitions, the use of a special additional term for cross-cousins is an indication of marriageable relatives within the framework of prohibition. This should not be considered to indicate a marriageable member in an active sense or a preference for cross-cousin marriage.

However, such marriages do sometimes appear in my census; for example, a man may have married a woman who is the sister of his brother's wife, or of his sister's husband. Thus sometimes between two descent groups there are more than two exchanges of men. But such relations are temporary and would terminate after one or two 582 generations. There is no structural continuity. My censuses of four Khasi villages do show some tendency to marriages between two 614 specific *kur*, but I consider this to be largely accidental. When the choice of an individual is random, but one or two *kur* are larger than the others, it will naturally follow that there will be a high frequency

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[171] [1] Such use of the dual terminology is also found among the Zuni and the Trukese, (see the discussion, in pp. 154-155).

of marriages between these two *kur*. Such marriage arrangements 582
cannot be regarded as constituting a cross-cousin institution. From 614
my data of four villages it was not possible to produce any institutionalized pattern.

In general, the selection of a marital partner depends mainly on personal choice, though the authority of the *iing* (descent group) and parents should be consulted. The man proposes to the girl. The network of marriage relations among the Khasi seems in no way to follow any set principle. Every marriage is likely to be fortuitous: it is ruled simply by temporary personal liking, except for the strict rule of exogamy and the avoidance of near kin.

Exogamy is strictly kept. In the olden days breaking this rule 178
was equivalent to being sentenced to death. Offenders had their
heads shaved in a particular way and had to leave the Khasi com- 582
munity completely. Even now such a marriage is considered as the 614
worst kind of sin; a Khasi Christian intellectual said to me that it 684
was worse than homicide. I came across one couple who had broken this rule. Though they had different *kur* names, both *kur* were segments of one common *kur*. It happened in Jatinga, one of the most modern Khasi communities whose inhabitants were all Christians. The couple were not allowed to have their house inside the village. Their house was in the jungle about one mile away from the village.

Successive sororate marriage—marriage to a younger sister of the 587
late wife—is practised, since it justifies the widower in remaining in the same household as his children after his wife's death. Otherwise, the Khasi rule demands that he should leave the house and his children in order to remarry another woman. We shall deal with this aspect again in terms of marriage.

## II. Principle of Descent and Succession

Previously I have mentioned the *kpoh*, the matrilineal kin group 613
with a common great grandmother. This is not, however, an institutional corporate descent group. The most important functional descent unit is called *iing*. The *iing* is the lowest order of clan segmentation, smaller than the *kpoh*—a *kpoh* may include two or more *iing*. The generation depth of an *iing* is usually two to four, in some cases an *iing* is formed only by mother and child. The Khasi consider this unit to be the most important social index for the classification of individuals. Marriages are arranged by individual *iing*, not by wider groups of kinsmen. The *iing* is the structurally significant norm. The term *iing* is also used for a house building itself, as is the *nok* of the Garo. However, the membership of the *iing*, as I shall

6/13 explain later, does not always correspond to a domestic unit, nor to a corporate production unit. At least husbands are excluded from the wives' *iing* though they share a common household. The members of an *iing* consist of a set of strictly matrilineal descendants, who have a common right over the ancestral property, are subject to a common authority and practise some joint ritual.

The membership of the *iing* is determined through the mother. The central core of the *iing* comprises two persons, one holding the authority and the other owning the property; the rule of succession is strictly matrilineal. The authority goes from mother's brother to sister's son while the property is handed down from mother to daughter. A man continues to be a member of the same *iing* all his life whether he marries or not. A woman, if she is not the heiress (the youngest daughter), will branch off after her marriage and though she herself will continue as member of her mother's *iing*, the third generation from her will form an independent *iing*. It is sometimes difficult to trace the clear line of each group, as it is formed by a process of branching off. The actual working of the *iing* may be explained as follows (see Fig. 11).

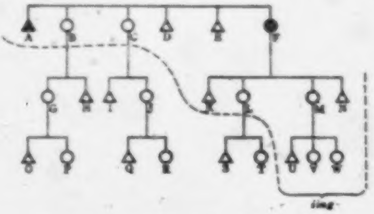

FIG. 11. — *Composition of the Members of an* Iing.

All members appearing in Fig. 11 form a *kpoh*. The dotted lines mark off members of one *iing*. F is the mother who possesses property and A is her brother who holds the authority in the *iing*. F's property is at the disposal of all members of the *iing* for funerals, and for religious ceremonies of the *iing*. But all members of the *iing* do not usually share the property, as I shall explain later in connection with the dwelling unit.

G, H, I, J, S and T are excluded from F's *iing*, but F is responsible for them if their mothers should die before their marriage. In case they loose their mother they must be fed by F, or by F's daughter, or by F's grand-daughter. The descendants of B, C and L will form respective independent *iing*, separated from F's. Thus, the position of B, C and L show the process by which an *iing* segments. F is succeeded at her death by her youngest daughter M.

On the death of A, he is succeeded in his position of authority by K. If K is too young, and D or E live in the same house as K, D or E will succeed A. Succession to the position of authority normally depends on seniority, but capability and the place of residence are also taken into account, according to circumstances. In the absence of A, D E, K and N, U succeeds to the office if he is grown up. 613 If U is too young, a chance arises for F's husband, if F is alive, if not, for M's husband.[1] In the event that none of these males be available, finally the office is taken by F and then by M. It should be noted that the office assumed by F's husband, M's husband, F or M would have to be returned to M's son, as soon as he comes of age. These cases are considered a temporary measure to meet an emergency.

The Khasi follow a strict descent line, and neither a classificatory 611 uncle (or brother) is allowed to take over the authority of the *iing*,[2] though if there is no successor to the property, a daughter may be 613 adopted from the nearest matrilineal descent group. Instead of the adoption of a daughter, the following steps may also be taken. The property is handed over to the nearest matrilineal descent group; or if there is a son, he may inherit his father's or mother's acquired property, but ancestral property should go to a matrilineal kin. In such cases, the particular *iing* actually becomes extinct: in the former case, though the property is handed over to another *iing*, this *iing* belongs to the same matrilineal line; in the latter, the property goes eventually to the son's wife and to his children, i.e. an *iing* of an entirely different *kur*. The latter arrangement suggests that though the Khasi follow the strict descent line, so far as the acquired property is concerned, the child has primary rights over the mother's other matrilineal kin, as expressed by the son's right of inheritance in the absence of a daughter. In this way, the *iing* may become extinct by the death of the female member who has no daughter.

The Khasi consider the *iing* institution as the basic and most 613 important functional unit; it represents also the religious unit which keeps ancestral property and shares a common religious ceremony. This is indeed the key to the whole Khasi social organization.

## III. RESIDENTIAL UNIT

In this section I shall deal with the relation between the *iing* and 592 the domestic dwelling unit and examine the type of relation maintained 593 between the marital family (husband, wife and children) and the 613 *iing*. Among the Garo, the *nok* corresponds to the actual group of individuals residing within one household. Upon this point the Khasi system is more complicated since spouses of members of the *iing* are excluded from the *iing*.

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[1] This would only arise in cases where the husbands of F or M live in the same household as their wives.

[2] In the case of succession to the chieftainship, a classificatory sister's son is taken in the absence of a direct nephew or brother

592 The Khasi domestic unit (co-residential group) can be divided into four categories:

1. Households consisting of wife, husband and their children, wife's unmarried sisters and brothers—sometimes including widowed or divorced.
2. [613] Households including all members of an *iing* (excluding their spouses from members of 1). In this type, larger households contain all the descendants of three or more generations from one woman (in this case, an *iing* corresponds to a *kpoh*).
3. [591] Households of intermediate type between 1 and 2. Husbands are supposed to live in their wife's house, but they often go back to their sister's house for meals, and sometimes sleep there. They are supposed to work in their wife's field but they might work in their mother's (sister's) field, if necessary. This tendency is especially strong among newly married couples before they have a child.
4. Households consisting of only one elementary family. This mostly happens when a man married a non-heiress.

Most Khasi households are of types 1, 3 and 4 and these three types
are usually found within one village. They were found in the four
villages in which I worked. It is to these dwelling units that I have
given the name of house in Lists 6 and 9. Category 2, according to
[178] the information of Khasis and Jaintias, was used to be found among
the Jaintias, though nowadays such cases are rapidly decreasing,
changing into forms 1, 3 and 4. The members of category 2 belong
to an *iing*, which structurally corresponds to the *tarwad* of the Nayar,
and the *parui* of the Minangkabau.

178 184 591 Category 2 may have been practised among certain of the Khasi a long time ago. Kongton people said that as recently as their father's generation, there were many husbands who stayed at the mother's house after their marriage and visited the wife at night. Nowadays, visiting husbands are very unusual cases in the Khasi Hills, though such situations may occur among newly married couples before they have children. Gurdon, who wrote his book *The Khasi* in 1914, states:

> "Amongst the Khasis, after one or two children are born, and if a married couple get on well together, the husband frequently removes his wife and family to a house she and her husband pool their earings, which are expended for the support of the family" (p. 76).

In the Khasi Hills, the transition period between duolocal residence and neolocal or uxorilocal residence seems to have been shortened during the last forty or fifty years. This might have been effected through the influence of Christian marriages, which start cohabitation of the wife and the husband immediatly after the marriage ceremony. However, in Jatinga whose inhabitants originated in the Jaintia Hills where duolocal marriage is the usual practice, there are even now many instances of a man staying at his mother's house for several years after his marriage. During this period he works in his wife's 178 field, then, if the couple gets on well, they start to live together in 184 an independent house (non-heiress's case) or in the wife's house (heiress's case). In spite of the fact that the inhabitants are all Christians, they have retained this custom.

It is difficult to determine at what date the Khasi people have 178 changed from duolocal marriage to uxorilocal marriage. However, 591 the present dwelling unit, with its fluid relationship between husband and wife (in fact, there are many cases of category 3), suggests a situation linked with the duolocal residence pattern. The fragmentary historical information available and the present Khasi residence pattern suggest that the duolocal arrangement may be an older pattern of marriage. When I was in Kongton there was no husband who stayed at his mother's house permanently, visiting his wife at night. The head man told me that, when he married, there were many who did not stay in the wife's house. He was the first person to settle in the wife's house. In his case, he said, he felt sympathy for his wife who had no brother who could work for her. After he had settled in his wife's house, many villagers began to follow his example.[1] When the [621] pattern of a visiting marriage was in vogue, a village must have constituted a more compact endogamous unit. If the husband's house was in another village, a visiting marriage must have been a great inconvenience. The tendency to settle in the wife's house and work for the wife's house must have brought about a wider range of marriage contracts, such as with members of nearby villages, even though in the present form of marriage, village endogamy is much preferred as it is decidedly advantageous particularly for a husband, since he can continue his life in the same familiar environment in spite of uxorilocal marriage.

The variations in the pattern of co-residential grouping, which 592 I have classified into four categories, reflect two different themes in 593 the social structure of the Khasi. On the one hand they represent 613 different stages in the maturity of the individual families concerned. For example, a householder who starts in category 3 or 4 may end as an old man in category 1. On the other hand these variations also reflect the polar opposition between the obligations of matrilineal kinship and the obligations of parenthood; a man, in particular, has conflicting obligations towards the *iing* of his sister and the *iing* of

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[1] However, all the information which I collected in the upland Khas [184] Hills indicates that the uxorilocal residence pattern has been practised for a long time. According to stories often told by the Kongton people, they migrated from the Jaintia Hills. If these accounts are to be taken as a reflection of the real history of their migration, it would seem that the Kongton people may have kept up the Jaintia custom including the duolocal residence pattern up to recent times, while the majority of the Khasi practised uxorilocal marriage.

592 his wife. Paternal rights are not well recognized among the Khasi.
593 The religious elements in the *iing* institution lay stress only on matri-
613 lineal solidarity. These elements tend therefore to orient each individual of the domestic unit to his or her own matrilineal kin group, the *iing*. This results in unstable relations between members of each elementary family, in other words, the marriage relation is one of the weakest.

000 This is the crucial point in matrilineal societies, and has been much discussed by anthropologists. Richards says,

> "In this balance of privileges and duties between the patrikin and the matrikin the crucial point is obviously the husband's right to determine the residence of the bride. If she and her children live in the same homestead or village as his kinsmen, his domestic authority is likely to be greater than where they remain with the wife's relative" (Richards, 1950, p. 208).

This statement is quite acceptable for those matrilineal systems which provide possibility for a man to take his wife from her matrikin to his house or village where the husband's kin are found, as in cases of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the Ashanti, the Trobriands and
591 the Nayar in North Malabar. However, among the Khasi, there is no such custom of removing a wife from her kin to that of her husband. Since most marriages take place inside a village, there are only two different residential arrangements: one is to take the husband to the wife's house, where he lives with his wife's parents and other matrikin; the second is for the newly married couple to establish an independent house. Among Khasi men and women the usual practice is to leave the parents' house at marriage, except in the case of the heiress (the youngest daughter). In this respect the Khasi differ again from the Nayar and the Minangkabau who form a sibling family on the basis of duolocal residence,[1] and from the Hopi, the Zuni and the Trukese who form a residential group of an extended family, based on matrilineal descent including in-marrying husbands of married females. Khasi sisters do not form a residential group after their marriage; sisters' houses are scattered over the whole village residential area, mixing with households of other descent groups (see Fig. 10 with List 8).

Then, what is the factor that makes the Khasi have two different types of residence i.e. uxorilocal and neolocal[2] within a matrilineal

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[1] Only the case of some traditional Jaintias (category 2) would appear to show groupings similar to those of the Nayar, however, I did not work among them, nor are there anthropological reports available for them, particularly in this respect.

[2] I use 'neolocal' in terms of house-building, since they usually build a house for newly married couple in the same village where both wife's and husband's parents live—village endogamy.

society? Among the matrilineal Central Bantus, Richards says that 591
the determining factor in residence at marriage is the marriage payment
or the type of goods and services which the bridegroom gives (Richards,
1950, p. 249). However, the Khasi have no such custom in the mar-
riage contract, it is therefore out of the question to explain the two
types of residence in this way. In the case of the Khasi, the determin- 182
ing factor is the type of marriage with relation to the rule of inheritance 428
and ownership of property, which is clearly related to the structure
of the *iing*. Khasi marriages can be divided into two categories i.e., 581
marriage with an heiress and with a non-heiress. Marriages with an 591
heiress must be uxorilocal. This accounts for category 1 or 3 of the 602
household pattern. On the other hand, marriages with a non-heiress 613
become neolocal and correspond to category 4 of the household unit.

## IV. MARRIAGE WITH THE HEIRESS

A man married to an heiress, usually lives with his wife's parents 182
and her unmarried or divorced brothers and sisters. For a man, life 428
after marriage under such circumstances require great adjustment 591
and endurance. The husband's status is especially weak when a male
member of the wife's kin lives in the same household. The manage- 592
ment of property and all economic activities are entirely controlled 593
by the authority (wife's brother or maternal uncle) of the *iing*. The 602
husband works in the wife's field under constant supervision from 604
this authority. Both economic activities and domestic affairs are 613
always under the management of this authority. The children have
more attachment to, and are more obedient to, the maternal uncle
than to the father. The tie between the uncle and the nephew is so
strong that the father is rather like an additional member of the
household. He is the last person to be introduced to visitors. [574]

This family system is clearly reflected in the daily behaviour. 123
When we visited the Khasi household of a youngest daughter, if a 574
man (obviously the husband) came first to greet us, he always said
"please wait, my wife (or mother-in-law) is coming." And it was 592
the wife who entertained us, offering tea or pan and discussing matters 593
with us, while her husband remained silent in the corner of the room, 602
or in the next room. If her uncle or brother was there, *he* would be 604
the person who talked to us, while his niece or sister served us. In
such a case, we were seldom introduced to the husband. When I was
working at Shella, I happened to stay in such a family. I had hardly
any opportunity to talk to the husband during the two weeks of my
stay. He left the house very early in the morning and came back 592
late in the evening from the fields. While he was at home, he was 593
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592 always somewhat outside the family conversation which was centred
593 on the maternal uncle and his sisters, nephews and nieces, by whom
604 I was well taken care of. This is somewhat similar to the situation
amongst the Cewa and the Yao of the Central Bantus, which have what Richard calls 'the detachable husband' (Richards, 1950, pp. 233-35, 248), though the parallel is not by any means exact.

428 There is, therefore, inevitably an element of tension in the relations
between the wife's maternal uncle (including parents-in-law) and the
581 husband (son-in-law) and this tension makes the latter's life extremely
586 uncomfortable. This awkward position is well shown in the divorce
rate. At Kongton (see List 9), out of 61 couples (house-owners and
[604] their spouses), the number of persons who had experience of divorce
[606] was 33 (female 15, male 18) and those married more than twice
[592] numbered 19 (female 7, male 12). Out of 61 couples, there were only
31 in which neither husband nor wife had been divorced. In my
[593] census of Jatinga village, 70 per cent of all divorce cases were marriages to heiresses. In general, the period when divorce occurs more frequently is before a couple get children and after the wife has passed the child-bearing age. A marriage breaks up either through the action of the wife or of the husband, but generally through that of the wife. However, the state of separation which I presently describe is brought about by the husband, though later it results in a divorce from the wife. Divorce does not mean a great catastrophe for a Khasi wife, especially if she is an heiress and her husband's economic
[587] contribution is not significant. Moreover, in this society remarriage is
as easy for a widow or divorcée, as it is to divorce. In the villages of Sohkynduh and Kongton, the couple who wants to divorce has only to throw a few Annas together in the presence of some witness, usually an elderly man.

581 In addition to divorce, there are many actual separations of husband
and wife, of short or long duration, when the husband runs away from
593 his wife's house to his sister's. Though it does not always end in
divorce, considerable number of husbands have a strong tendency to spend most of their time at their sister's house. Khasi women often told me, "I don't know why he does not come back to my place." I have often found the husband staying at his sister's house only a few houses away from his wife's, without any particular reason. They are obliged to see each other every day whether divorced or separated. This kind of ambiguity in the marriage relation seems to have an important correlation with the Khasi social structure, combined with the village endogamy. The man and and wife have grown up together from their childhood in the same village and known each other very well. Hence their psychology cannot clearly distinguish the marriage form as a newly-established independent social relation-

ship. They still live in the same familiar atmosphere as before their 581
marriage. The implications of this ambiguity in the married state are 593
considerable. Particularly the husband's uncomfortable situation,
when the wife is heiress, encourages him to take marriage less seriously.

A husband who undergoes hardship in his wife's house, finds 581
himself as the authority in his sister's house; if he is not the authority, 591
he can find at least a respected position as uncle or brother. In the
case of a man of authority in the *iing*, the tendency for him to regard 592
his *iing* as more important than his married life is proportionately 593
stronger, as I will discuss later. Hence the most unstable and un- 602
successful marriages are those between the heiress and the man of
authority. This is one of the reasons we often find among the Khasi: 604
a brother or an uncle, who is already married, acting nevertheless as 613
the head to a family *(iing)* and as a member of its domestic group. 428
This means that he is in a state of temporary separation or divorced.
Among the Ashanti, a man and his wife's brother are never found as [171]
members of a common household (Fortes, 1950, p. 262), but among
the Khasi, on the contrary, a man and his wife's brother are often found as members of a common household. In such cases, however, the brother has no wife, or never brings his wife to his *iing*. Therefore, a man and his wife and his sister never reside together. As far as the residence of women is concerned, the Khasi keep to the strict descent rule; two women who belong to different descent groups never live together. This point differentiates the Khasi residence pattern, in which social structure is involved, from that not only of the Ashanti but also of the Yao where the head of a descent group can bring his wife to his sister's household, though, among other members, uxorilocal marriage is the rule. These differential aspects of matrilineal systems will be discussed from a more theoretical point of view later.

In addition, should a Khasi man even succeed in spending his life 602
with his wife's kinsmen, as soon as the wife dies, he will usually 613
return to his *iing*, that is, to his sister's house, where he is received warmly and where he often acts as the *de facto* authorithy, as in the similar situation of divorce and separation. Thus the strong matrilineal structural principle tends to orient a man towards his own descent group, the *iing*.

The man's attachment to his *iing* is very great throughout his 171
life. In this regard the Khasi differs from the matrilineal Negri 592
Sembilan Malay. Among the latter, returning to the matrilineal kin 602
is regarded by the man as an imposition rather than as the enjoyment 613
of a legitimate privilege (see Swift, 1958, p. 157).[1] This difference 428

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[1] He presents this fact as one of the reasons of the durability of marriage among the Negri Sembilan. Indeed, on this precise point they differ from the Khasi where marriage is rather unstable. [581]

171 seems to come *firstly* from the different residential arrangement on
592 marriage: among the Negri Sembilan a man marries into his wife's
602 group, i.e. his wife's village; being thus separated from his kin, and
613 as a result of the physical absence of his wife's brother or maternal
428 uncle in his domestic family, he enjoys considerable rights in his
wife's household—as Swift states, he is 'master in his own house.' On the other hand, since among the Khasi the man stays in the village where his mother's (or mother's successor's) house is, even after his marriage, his relation to his natal house is preserved; *secondly*, from the structural difference of organization of the descent group. Among the Khasi, the *iing* is always the centre of the descent group, based on unigeniture succession and inheritance. Hence, the core of the descent group is always found physically in a particular household, whereas among the Negri Sembilan, the descent group is *not* organized on a *household* level, but is a much wider organization, including apparently many households. Membership of an actual household and of a descent group are at different levels. To marry out and become a member of his wife's household means for the man the transfer of his household membership. Likewise, his sister's husband becomes a member of his sister's household. Thereby he becomes a secondary member of his sister's household after marriage though he keeps his memberhsip in the descent group to which his sister belongs. Among the Khasi, membership of a descent group always corresponds to membership of a particular household. The Khasi man can always demand his rights at his natal house primarily, as he is a member of that descent group. But it should be noted that he has this right only in his mother's (or mother's successor's) household, not his other sisters' (non-heiress') and mother's sisters' households (unless one of them is successor of his mother), though they may belong to the same descent group. These matri kin's households are considered as separate *iing* (strict functional descent group) from his.

586 Indeed, sometimes a man cannot find his *iing*, because his mother
613 died leaving no daughter to succeed her, or his sister died leaving
no successor, and his *iing* became extinct. Such a case occasionally
736 happens when a man becomes a divorcé or a widower as he is getting
428 old. Then he has to face a serious social and economic condition. In
divorcing, he has to leave everything he owned, his earnings including the house which he built, and even children . . . really he has nothing left him except his body.[1] Such a wretched man collects some timber and makes a small hut for himself, though sometimes lads who sympathize with him help him to build it. Unless he finds some woman

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[1] A widower has an alternative solution—to remain in his late wife's household till he marries again, though his position is not comfortable there.

whom he can marry, he has to endure this miserable lonely life, while 586
often in the same village his former wife is living in a well-built house 613
with her children and her matrilineal relatives as before. Households 736
of 3, 13 and 30 of Sohkynduh in List 6, and 23, 29, 38 and 56 of Kongton 428
in List 9 are instances of such cases. It is really a pitiful picture to see such a man, aged and poor, living all alone.

## V. Marriage with the Non-heiress

Outsiders who come to the Khasi Hills are often impressed by the 184
Khasi husband's miserable status and express surprise at the high
divorce rate. This is mostly due to exaggeration based on the marriage 428
with the heiress. However, where a man marries a non-heiress, 593
there are many successful marriages with paternal authority. In most of these cases a man's status as a husband and as a father is stable. First of all, the domestic residential unit is an elementary family. From the onset of the marriage the husband's labour is of great importance to his family, since a non-heiress usually has no economic background, i.e., no dowry or inherited property (see p. 105). The economic circumstances allow a man to be the *de facto* head even though whatever he earns belongs, as a rule, to his wife. A man who succeeds at the beginning of his married life is respected and honoured as father in his family for the rest of his life. By this type of marriage, the man's status is firmly established. It is therefore a more secure form of marriage than a match with an heiress.

In such a marriage the children love and obey their father. The management of his acquired property will be taken over by his son and the property will be handed over to his daughter. Thus the paternal authority is as well established in this form of domestic family, as in a patrilineal family. However, the great difference from a patrilineal case is that the husband/father status is not permanent
as the authority of the family. Theoretically he exercises it in the [613]
absence of a male adult member of his wife's *iing* (actually founded by his contribution), in other words, till his son is grown up (see p. 12). In the next generation this will form an established *iing* in which the husband of his youngest daughter will suffer again.

The household of this kind of marriage with a non-heiress actually 592
enjoys a considerable degree of independence from the descent groups 593
of both wife and husband. If a man who has established a matrimonial
life independent of his wife's natal *iing*, is not the authority of 613
his natal *iing*, his relation with the latter usually becomes weaker. Economic and residential factors make it possible for the men to make the considerable shift from his *iing* to his wife's *iing*, and though

592 he clearly maintains the label of his descent group, he is at least
593 divorced from them economically. If a father's activities were such
613 as to permit the accumulation of wealth to be handed over to the next generation, he is always remembered with great respect and admiration by his successors and by the descendants of his wife's matrilineal line. In such a case he is looked upon as a member of his wife's descent group rather than of his mother's descent group. The best examples of this are the cases of men belonging to the first generation of Jatinga villagers, especially that of the founder of
[166] Jatinga. These immigrants to Jatinga mostly accompanied their wives, who were not heiresses (as I mentioned previously, the unit of Khasi immigrants is mostly found in this kind of a couple); and most of them established successful matrimonial life with paternal authority, having been freed from the gravity of both matri-kin of wife as well as of husband.

Not necessarily confined to such cases of immigrants, even in an ordinary situation, if husband is ready to devote himself for his wife and children, the matrimonial life mostly turns happier and well established one. For under the Khasi matrilineal system, a wife, if she is not the heiress, is normally oriented to develop surprisingly high degree of independence from her descent group, i.e. her natal *iing*, unlike women of other matrilineal societies. This fact is closely related with the unique structure of the *iing*, as already discussed.

As a woman (non-heiress) tends to keep a certain distance to her natal *iing*, her brother accordingly decreases his concern to her new household. The pressure of the authority (wife's maternal uncle or brother) of wife's natal *iing*, on such a household becomes less marked. The wife's brothers are members of her natal *iing*, not of her new established *iing*, and therefore none of them can act as an authority over her new *iing*, though they may exercise certain pressure on the sister's husband, since the sister who established the new *iing* still keeps her membership in her natal *iing*. In fact a husband actually feels pressure from his wife's brothers; the occasional visits of the authority of her natal *iing* exercise a psychological check on his whole control over her and his children. Should any serious mischance occur in the marriage, the wife will run to her brother for consultation. Furthermore, as member of her natal *iing*, he has the right to demand the property acquired by him if his wife has no successor, since it automatically belongs to his wife unless he acquired it without cohabitation with her, or through the capital of his *iing*. However, the process of segmentation in the *iing* leads the wife to greater attachment to her husband, particularly when his economic contribution is important, and as a consequence weakens her ties with her natal *iing*.

613 The limited rights of the brother over his sister's (non-heiress)

household are easily understandable in the light of the economic 613
aspect of the fission of the *iing*. As I stated before, the non-heiress
is given hardly any share of the property of her natal *iing* on her
marriage (if the *iing* is rich a non-heiress and the sons may receive
some part), and even if her new household happens to face serious
economic difficulty, her natal *iing*, whose authority is vested in her
brother, does not usually help her. This fact clearly suggests that
brothers can have only limited rights over the elder sister's *iing*.

This is the crucial point of the Khasi matrilineal system. The 182
*iing* is a very restricted descent group, giving opportunities to split off
by those who have no right to inheritance. The *iing* has vertical 611
continuity without expansion in collateral lines. Therefore, even the 613
siblings of the same mother do not always form a completely constant
unit of a functional descent group, since the elder sisters are oriented
by their marriages to form a new *iing*, though they may retain their
membership in their natal *iing*. The central core of the *iing* is the
particular sibling bond between a sister (the heiress) and a brother
(the authority), a pair of statuses. Other sisters are ready to leave
and other brothers are fluid members, clearly differentiated in status
from that particular brother (authority) and sister (heiress). This
structural principle should be compared with other matrilineal descent
groups, whose sibling group is based on interdependence between
members of a group, not between particular persons or statuses. The
structural unit of the Khasi social organization, is *not* the descent
group based on sibling links, but the *iing*, though descent is the principal factor, and the limiting one, in the formation of the *iing* institution. The descent factor is delineated by the functional force of the
inheritance rule through female ultimogeniture, which results in constant internal fission and segmentation in the descent group. Technic- [171]
ally, it is very similar to the process of fission of the Garo *nok* on the
unigeniture principle, though the internal structure is different.

The establishment of a new household by a Khasi woman with
her husband, means the beginning of the establishment of a new *iing*,
separated from her natal *iing* not only in residence but also sociologically. In other words, it is the process of fission and segmentation
of an *iing*, matrilineal descent group. Therefore, a woman who has
once established a new household independent of her natal household,
will not go back to her natal house i.e. her mother's descent group,
though her bond with her mother's descent group remains undiminished. Of course she may visit her natal *iing* occasionally, but in fact,
much less than her husband will visit his natal *iing*. In this respect [171]
as well the Khasi manifest structural differences from the Ashanti as
described by Fortes, where a mother goes back to her own matricentral
household and often prefers to reside there (Fortes, 1949, p. 77). Even 000

Even
182 after divorce or husband's death, the Khasi woman stays on in her
586 household. Indeed many divorced or widowed poor wives, whose
613 children are still small, try their best to live and bring up their children
by themselves without asking their brothers' help. Of course a
736 mother and her small children may go back to live in her natal
*iing*. Such cases are found particularly when the woman's *iing* is
rich. However, during my field work, I found no sense of psycholo-
gical inferiority in Khasi women, widows or divorcées, such as we
usually find in other societies. The personality of the individual
seems to reflect the social structure.

182 Given such strong residential independence on the part of the
184 non-heiress, economically divorced from her descent group, and
oriented towards sociological separation from it, the husband's eco-
586 nomic and social contribution is handsomely rewarded by the estab-
593 lishment of a stable, happier, matrimonial life. In fact, as already
613 mentioned, the divorce rate among such couples is very low contrasted
with the high rate among marriages with heiresses. More accurately,
I should say that divorce is more likely to occur among the latter
owing to the conflict of loyalties towards spouse and *iing*. Therefore,
when each partner has less loyalty towards his or her natal *iing*, the
divorce cases become correspondingly fewer. Thus, among the Khasi,
successful marriages are frequently found where there is branching
off from an *iing*. And a new *iing* is always established by a husband's
contribution.

182 Khasi men, who are well aware of this fact, prefer to marry a
184 non-heiress, since they will then form an independent household and
remain immune to pressure from their wife's kin. However, they
581 say a poor or lazy man prefers marriage with an heiress. As Richards
said of the matrilineal Central Bantus, the residence on marriage seems
to be a most important index of the husband's status, though the
determining factors of the residence of the Khasi differ from those
of the Bantus (see p. 124).

182 In the case of marriage with an heiress, when the wife dies, the
husband usually returns to his *iing* (the youngest sister's house). But
184 in marriage with a non-heiress the husband often remains with his
587 children, if his children are not too small and he is not planning to
593 marry any woman other than his late wife's younger sister. If he
619 marries his wife's younger sister, he has the right to stay on. This
kind of sororal marriage cannot take place in the case of a man married
736 to an heiress, since a Khasi man is not allowed to marry the late wife's
elder sister. This form of sororate is found among the Khasi, but
the levirate is unknown, such as can be seen among the Ashanti
182 and the Ila, where a man takes his late brother's wife. Among
587 the Khasi, even if a widow happened to marry her late husband's

brother (actually not likely to happen), the levirate has no sociological 182
implication in the social structure, which is specifically related to 587
the residence rule. The levirate seems to have a significant function
only when a marriage is virilocal—when the husband has full rights
over his residence and property. This is also another aspect where
the Khasi structure shows a marked difference from that of the Ashanti
and the Ila, etc.

## VI. MARRIAGE OF THE MAN OF AUTHORITY OF AN *IING*

Among these successful marital families, there are also shadows 592
of a matrilineal order. These affect especially those men who are in 593
the position of authority in an *iing*. Such a man, though he has an 602
independent household with his wife and children, often visits his
youngest sister's (or niece's) house, *iing* (*ka iing seng*), and sometimes 619
stays there. Such a man's attachment to his *iing* is not only social
or psychological, but also often economic. The man, as authority [182]
of his natal *iing*, usually has economic control over the management,
particularly so, if his *iing* has considerable property or active trading
business. As husband/father in his family he works for his wife and
children, but often takes into consideration as well the interests of
his *iing*. I found such cases especially among richer villagers in
Shella and Jatinga, where the main economic activities were based
on trading.

Among the Khasi, it is quite a traditional rule of the division of
labour that women engage in trading activities at markets whether [443]
on a large or small scale. Husbands may carry goods from field to [462]
market, but male members are kept away from the actual scene of
the selling and buying. However, these activities on the part of the
women are controlled and accounted for by their uncle or brother, or
even son (or, if no male member is available, by the husband), though in
many cases they form separate domestic families. The man's control
over the trade appears more marked when the scale of business is large.

A man of Jatinga, who worked in a shop in Haflong, spent his
salary in keeping his wife and children, but at the same time he kept
the accounts of his sister who was a professional merchant. Thus,
the economy of the *iing* and that of the co-residential group are
crossed by the dual role of the man. Hence, among the Khasi, residential
autonomy is not always an indication of economic autonomy.
However, it should be clearly understood that a man's acquired [421]
property goes to his co-residential group, not to his *iing*.

A man of authority is attached to his *iing* by the stronger ties of
religious, social and economic (management) duties as well as by

592 sentiment, in spite of his forming an independent domestic unit. Such a
593 man with two households, the family of orientation and of procreation, says "one leg is in my sister's house and the other is in my wife's,"
602 and he feels more at home in his sister's. In villages, whenever a
613 Khasi man in such a position invited me, I was always taken to his
[123] sister's (or niece's) house, his *iing*, not to his wife's. There I was warmly welcomed with highest respect by the women of the household as the guest of their uncle (or of their brother), the head of the *iing*. Khasi men whom outsiders often regard as hopeless in their social position, thus enjoy the highest status in their *iing*.

One Khasi gentleman who occupies a fairly high post in the Government, at Haflong, leaving his wife (non-heiress) and children at Shillong, to my question "when you go to Shillong into which house do you first step," immediately replied, "As soon as I get back to Shillong, I take the way to my sister's home and there take the evening meal with them, enjoying their talk. Then I go to my wife's house where my loving children are waiting." This shows a typical Khasi man's psychology in relation to a family of orientation and of procreation. His first concern on coming back to his homeland is whether his sister and her children are well, since he is the man of authority in that *iing*. He feels much more relaxed in his sister's house where he is held in higher regard and more cared for.

I came across many similar cases. In Jatinga and Shella, such men on returning from their work, often have their evening meal with their sisters though their wives are waiting for them. Furthermore, if they choose to do so, they sleep at their sister's house without even going back to their wife's house. This results in an unstable married life, where a wife has to face a psychological handicap caused by the occasional absence of the husband, in spite of her advantageous position in a matrilineal and uxorilocal system. Many wives worry every day over whether or not their husbands will come to their house at night. And often this concern changes into sadness and loneliness when the husband does not return for several days on end. The wife knows her husband is at his sister's house in the same village. But she has no right to fetch her husband home. As in Western social dancing, the women have to wait till their partners come. During my field work I often came across these lonely women, just waiting for their husbands, each knowing he was only a few houses
[123] away. Though these Khasi women never show their feelings of loneliness in the presence of others, I, being a female anthropologist, was often told of the sadness of their married life. The situation of these women can be more easily understood if we remember the process of the segmentation of the *iing*, which separates each married woman from her descent group, her natal *iing*.

Thus, the marriage of a non-heiress and a man of authority also 182
produces an unstable position for the husband in spite of his having
an independent household. Therefore, the possibility of a really stable 593
marriage is even more limited; it will occur only in the match of a 602
non-heiress and a non-authority of the *iing*. But even these marriages 613
cannot be free from the influence of a matrilineal social structure: 184
the man of authority of the wife's *iing* may visit these couples now
and then, curb the husband's power and remind both partners of the
orientation towards the matri-kin, the *iing*, though this pressure is
insignificant in comparison with that experienced by the heiress's
family. Likewise, a husband now and then visits his youngest sister's
house, *ka iing sen*. These constant matrilineal contacts offer husbands
chances of escaping from even the slightest matrimonial tension.
Whenever a Khasi man feels uneasiness, he will return to his sister's
house rather than face a difficult situation with his wife. This tendency
is maximised especially on the occasion of religious ceremonies,
when all individuals are grouped around each *iing*.

It is apparent that the rules of the *iing* as the underlying structural pattern, function throughout the various categories of domestic unit of the Khasi community as the most important intrinsic force.

## VII. POLYGYNY

After this long attempt at the structural analysis of marriages, 595
I think one can theoretically predict what is the situation of polygyny
among the Khasi. The theoretical framework elaborated through
preceding discussions can also be tested by the empirical data in terms
of polygyny.

Nowadays, the Khasi feel so strongly against polygyny that they 177
have no knowledge even that they ever practised it. Many Khasi,
in more sophisticated areas, did not believe my findings on polygyny 178
in Sohkynduh and Kongton. I think this is due to the rapid Christian- 595
ization of the Hills during the last hundred years. My interpreter, 797
though he was not Christian, said to me in the village, "it is most
regrettable to bring you to a village where we find polygyny." How-
ever, one of the ministers of the Cherra State to which the two villages
belong, told me that there was no particular opposition to polygyny,
though recent Christian influence gave people the idea that it was a
shameful custom, and he mentioned the case of a polygynist in his
area, a man who had recently died, who had had ten wives. In 178
Jatinga whose inhabitants are all Christian, and in Shella where there 184
has been much contact with, and influence by, Hindus, there were 595

178 no polygynists, though there were many personal temporary illicit relations or love affairs.

184 It is true that even in interior villages polygyny is rapidly decreas-
595 ing. In the two villages I found only two cases of polygyny: a man with two wives in Sohkynduh (Josio in List 6, whose wives are 26 and 32), and a man with three wives in Kongton (Jubongrai in List 9, whose wives are 8, 20 and 52). These cases appeared clearly as cases of polygyny which the villagers recognized as such, speaking of them quite differently from the way they would have spoken of lovers, calling them wives and husbands. Of course, the first wife socially outranks the secondary wives, as *ka tynga trai*, and the term *ka tynga tuh* is used for the latter, as Gurdon states (1914, p. 80). The difference being that the first wife has a legal marriage ceremony while the
585 others have not—*ka tynga tuh* means literally 'stolen wife.' About the marriage ceremony, Gurdon gives a detailed discription (*ibid.*,
595 pp. 127-130) and says there are three forms of marriage ceremonies, *Pynhiarsynjat*, *Lamdoh* and *Iadih-hiad*. The first and second forms are considered the more respectable; the last one is resorted to by the very poor who cannot afford the greater expense entailed by the first two. Unfortunately, during my stay in these villages, no marriage ceremony took place, but villagers described to me what seems to be the *Iadih-hiad*, where only a fowl is sacrified, and the whole procedure is much simpler than that described by Gurdon. However, whatever the complexity and richness may be, there is a distinct line between having a ceremony and not having it, and this draws the distinction between the status of the first wife and that of the secondary wives.

428 Nevertheless, this distinction has more of a social bearing than the legal bearing it has in a patrilineal system. Since they follow the
595 matrilineal system, the legal distinction between the first wife and
851 the secondary wife does not affect their children's status and their property rights, at least not in the villages where I worked. The children's social locus is determined by their mother. The children (particularly the youngest daughter) have the right to inherit their father's acquired property which is automatically under their mother's ownership. If the polygynist father has acquired property by working their mother's field, or in trading on behalf of their mother, whether she be the first wife or the second, this property undoubtedly belongs to the children of that wife, not to the first wife alone. The father's physical locus at the time of his economic realisations is the decisive factor.

591 The Khasi polygynist, without bringing his wives into one house-
595 hold, alternates his residence among them, in turn or according to his temper. This practice is similar to that of the Trukese described by Goodenough (1951, p. 123), and quite different from that of the Garo

which I described previously, where a man brings his secondary wives 591
to his first wife's house in which he is acting as the head. Furthermore, 595
sororal polygyny is prohibited, while it was prefered among [171]
the Garo in terms of wives taken from the same *mahari*, though mostly
not real sisters. The strong jealousy, which I observed, among the Khasi wives of a polygynist, would appear to make such polygynous marriages with closely related women practically impossible. As shown in List 6 & 9 every single one of the wives of each polygynist belongs to different *kur*, and the two secondary wives of the man of Kongton came from neighbouring villages.

These aspects of Khasi polygyny are related fundamentally to 182
the underlying Khasi social structure. It should be remembered that
every married woman has her independent household, *iing*, and that 591
two women of different descent groups never reside together (see p. 127). 595
The picture is one of every married woman holding a key-point in 613
the whole network of the social system, and men fit into this network 837
with much flexibility. The strong stability of women and the fluid nature of men in terms of residence naturally produces this form of polygyny. This analogy is also true of lovers' relations and illegal
marriages. Though polygyny is a rapidly decreasing institution all [171]
over the Khasi Hills, cases of lovers' relations and illegal marriages
are found to be very numerous among the Khasi, as compared with neighbouring tribes and peoples in Assam.

Throughout my discussions of various forms of Khasi marriage, 182
I found men to be more or less in the position wittily described by one
of them as "having one leg in my sister's house, the other in my 591
wife's," except in cases of the husband/father who succeds in establishing 593
paternal authority, as in marriages with a non-heiress. Even in 613
the latter a man might have a period of uncertainty until his children
were born and until the economic basis for his matrimonial life was 836
firmly established. For the rest, Khasi men would be in the position 837
of either becoming the authority of an *iing*, or swinging between their sister and their wife, which may produce more opportunities for lovers' relations. One of a man's legs is certainly always found in his sister's house, the other may rest in his wife's, but it may also rest in another woman's house. The wife being rather accustomed to his occasional absence due to his visits to his sister's house, another kind of absence does not mark any great change from the usual situation, at least not physically. Such situations occur particularly in the earlier stage of the marriage, as a sort of continuation of premarital affairs, which are quite freely practised: it is a usual custom before marriage for young men to sleep at a girl's house whom they like though they say sexual intercourse usually does not take place in such cases. This I observed in Sohkynduh and Kongton.

182 Because of the firm right of women over the residence, Khasi polygyny can never be a clearly distinguishable institution, and has no 595 operational advantage in the social and economic fields; the situation is very similar with lovers' relations and illegal marriages. By polygyny the man achieves no additional economic advantage, nor does he increase his social status or prestige; rather the reverse, for I observed that the polygynyst was regarded as a somewhat ludicrous or tragic figure. As for the woman, she is placed slightly at a disadvantage since the husband's economic activities are not concentrated on her household. However, even many legally-married wives are separated or divorced, so that such disadvantages are not only experienced by the wives of polygynists. The social disadvantage of being secondary wife is not serious, firstly, because wives, whether first or secondary, have social and economic independence—they do not belong to the husband as in the case of patrilineal systems. Secondly, the significance attached to the legal marriage institution is not so great, so that the handicap of being the secondary wife is not severe. What is most important, furthermore, is that her slightly inferior status does in no ways affect the next generation. Indeed such children, including [848] those of premarital or illegal relations, suffer no serious social disadvantage, though they are nominally distinguishable from legitimate [851] children. From this it is clear that the effectiveness of legitimate marriage, and paternal recognition are rather limited among the Khasi.

Thus, Khasi polygyny differs greatly from the polygyny of other societies in terms of its operation and of its form. It also differs in the incentive to its practice. Among the Garo and many other societies, the practice of polygyny usually depends on a man's economic capability, but among the Khasi, it appears rather to depend on his 182 whim. Khasi husbands are notorious for their heavy drinking and neglect of wife and children. Some of them told me that their earnings, 593 their children and everything they acquired go to their wife or sister, 733 leaving them with nothing; therefore they should at least have freedom to enjoy their life. This freedom seemed to mean women and drink. I am not sure how far this explanation is true, but it seems to justify their behaviour to a certain extent. I do not mean that this is the general characteristic of the Khasi husbands, but some such tendency is to be observed. Actually I often heard wives complain of their husbands' drinking and running after women, and was asked "Are your Japanese husbands also like that?", "What is the good of having a husband!" then comes divorce . . .

182 On the contrary, women placed at an advantage by residence and matrilineal inheritance, are required always to be on their best 562 behaviour. There are very strict rules governing the behaviour of 593 Khasi women. They are supposed not to drink, smoke, or play with

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any man other than their husband. Women before marriage enjoy 562
a considerable freedom in love affairs, but once married these are no 593
longer tolerated. Women should be faithful wives. They should be 182
so in order to keep their husbands who have a strong tendency to 562
leave their wives. The husband of a woman who has an affair with
another man, will never come back to her. There is no attraction to 581
draw the husband, who has home at his sister's, to his wife's house 593
unless she is good and charming. Such Gurdon's remarks as "There 836
is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed among the Khasis.
Unlike the Tibetans, the Khasi women seem to have contented them- 182
selves always with one husband, at any rate with one at a time" 562
(Gurdon, 1914, p. 77), is utterly nonsense: a Khasi woman is placed 595
in a situation which is not easy to monopolize even one husband.
Moreover, the Khasi social organization in general does not accord
to the practice of polyandry.

[P. 140 is blank]

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7
Garo AR5

# DISCUSSION OF MATRILINEAL SYSTEMS

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As a concluding discussion, I shall here deal with the main theoretical problems concerning matrilineal systems as a whole; at the same time, I shall attempt to make clear the structural alignment of the Garo and Khasi systems, together with other matrilineal systems. For this purpose, my analysis is focused particularly on the structure and composition of the descent group, with relation to residential patterns. For my argument it is very important to keep in mind the concept of the descent group. In this discussion, I use the term 'descent group' as constituting a 'corporate property group'; more properly, perhaps, this unit should be called the matrilineal inheritance group. Though the discussion deals mainly with matrilineal systems, it also touches upon theoretically important aspects of unilineal systems as a whole.[1]

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[1] The analysis of matrilineal descent groups has been greatly advanced since Audrey Richard's outstanding contribution on the comparative study of Central Bantu matrilineal societies (Richard, 1950). Among all, the recent publication of *Matrilineal Kinship* (Edited by Schneider and Gough, 1961) is a remarkable achievement as the landmark in the series of studies in this field.

My analysis presented here, however, has been developed quite independently from that of *Matrilineal Kinship* (when the latter was published, the manuscript of this essay had already been sent to the publisher: the publication of this book is unusually delayed). Though some of the issues touch upon the discussions presented by these authors, particularly of David Schneider's Introduction, the angle of my analysis differs considerably from theirs. Firstly, my analysis is primarily concerned with the differences in the structures of matrilineal systems, while Schneider's discussion intends to bring out the distinctive features of matrilineal descent groups in contrast to that of patrilineal systems; again it is also quite different from that of Kathleen Gough, the major concern of which is the corelations between productivity (or ecology) and social structure; and also from that of David Aberle's cross-cultural comparison by using a large ethnographic sample. Secondly, my argument develops from the analysis of the Garo and Khasi social structures, while in that of Schneider, these two matrilineal systems seem to fall in a rather exceptional cases: in fact they are excluded from a set of his collection of matrilineal systems, on which his theory is tested.

# I

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K

121 The discussion of Parts I and II reveals that the social structure
171 of the Garo and the Khasi differ greatly. Similarity is found only
182 at the level of the minimum criteria of matrilineal systems: the basic succession rules of mother-daughter, mother's brother-sister's son;
611 and the fact that property is owned by the woman, but the controlling power and authority over it are in the hands of the man.

One of the most outstanding structural differences between the two lies in the composition of a property group: the property group of the Khasi is formed by a descent group at a shallow generation depth, while that of the Garo is maintained by the cooperation of two local lines, each of which represents a localized lineage group. Hence the descent group of the former tends to have stronger solidarity, whereas the latter tends to be weakened in its solidarity.

In a broad framework, in terms of social organization, the Garo fall structurally into a category based on the moiety arrangement, in which patrilineal systems, such as the Murngin, and the Kariera, etc., are also to be found. Theoretically, this type of mechanism is operative in either matrilineal or patrilineal systems: by the exchange of men in the former and the exchange of women in the latter.

On the other hand, the Khasi system presents more outstanding features of a type which is generally accepted as belonging to matrilineal systems. However, the basic structural traits of this system may also be found among patrilineal systems, in terms of relatively stronger descent group solidarity.

Though both matrilineal and patrilinal systems may share such basic structural categories, they differ significantly in the following respects: in matrilineal systems, the ownership of property and the authority over the property group never rest in one person, as in the case of the father/husband of the patrilineal systems, and the succession to these two offices follows the female line (mother-daughter) and the male line (mother's brother-sister's son) as shown in line *A* and line *B* in Fig. 12. This duality of office-holding individuals within the succession rule is the intrinsic cause

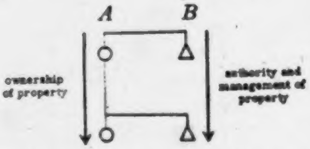

FIG. 12. — *Succession Lines of Female and Male in the Matrilineal System.*

Lines *A* and *B* may include sister-sister, and brother-brother relation respectively, also members of classificatory category; variations in these minor points depend on each matrilineal system.

G K

of complications and variations in matrilineal systems. The matrilineal system is not a mirror of the patrilineal system; it is a different system in which more complicated mechanisms are involved. This complexity of the matrilineal system is a decided handicap when it comes to resisting radical economic changes. In order to preserve the system, a fairly stable economy is required, well-balanced in its population and resources. This may be one of the reasons for the rapid disintegration or unstability of social organization of matrilineal peoples in the world.

121 171 182 611

The difficulty of preserving in function both lines *A* and *B* is caused by residential problems—individual marriages which contradict the sibling cohesion. According to my theoretical analysis, there are four alternative ways of resolving such contradictory factors, each case being represented by actual ethnographic samples.[1] Each arrangement represents a different degree of the function of the two lines *A* and *B* in relation to the residential pattern, as following (see Fig. 13):

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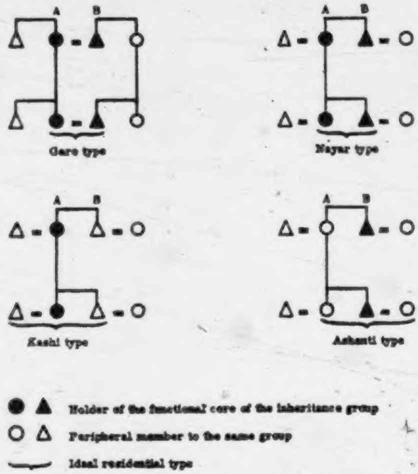
A
B
Garo type
Nayar type
Kashi type
Ashanti type
● ▲ Holder of the functional core of the inheritance group
○ △ Peripheral member to the same group
Ideal residential type

FIG. 13. — *Central Core of Matrilineages in Relation to Property Groups and Residential Groups.*

*The Garo type:* The co-residential type is 'husband-wife' instead of 'brother-sister.' The function of both lines *A* and *B* is equally strong. This is kept by the marriage contract between two local lines, so that it is possible to keep the function of each line against the residential separation of the two lines in one descent group. This type is found at the moment only among the Garo.

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[1] For this discussion I take only such major matrilineal samples for which ample documentation is available.

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*The Nayar type:* The counter scheme of the Garo type: the co-residential type is 'brother-sister' instead of 'husband-wife.' The function of both line *A* and *B* is equally strong. This type is found among the traditional Nayar (except those in North Malabar) and the Minangkabau matrilineal people.

*The Khasi type:* The ideal co-residential type consists of a woman with either her husband or her brother. The function of line *A* is much stronger than that of line *B*. This type is found among the Khasi, the Hopi, the Zuni, the Trukese, the Negri-Sembilan Malay, the Yao, etc.

*The Ashanti type:* The ideal co-residential type consists of a man with either his wife or his sister. The function of line *B* is much stronger than that of line *A*. This type is found among the Ashanti, the Gwembe Tonga, the Mayombe, the Trobriands, the Nayar of North Malabar, etc.

In terms of the strong function of both lines *A* and *B*, both the Garo type and the Nayar type may fall into a similar category. But as already explained, their structure basically differs from one another, and clearly appears as the counter schemes of different residential arrangements. The Nayar type shares with the Khasi a rather similar structure in terms of a descent group equated with a property group, while in the Garo type the two lines *A* and *B* of a single descent group never form an independent property unit.

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If, leaving aside the Garo type, we consider the three others, the Nayar type appears again different from the rest in so far as in it, both lines fulfill an equally strong function, while in the Khasi and Ashanti types, one of the two lines is always more developed functionally than the other. The Nayar type presents the highest degree of descent group solidarity among the three. This Nayar situation might be compared with that of the traditional Chinese patrilineal systems.[1] In both social systems the structural importance of marriage is minimized: the role of a spouse is only to ensure descendants of the matrilineal (patrilineal) group. The structural importance of a husband (wife) is almost neglected, while the wife (husband) holds the paramount locus in her (his) descent line. The descent group manifests the strongest solidarity within itself, neglecting affinal relations with other groups. This principle results in the custom of the "visiting husband" in the matrilineal system; and, in the patrilineal system, in a total social shift of the wife by her complete assimilation into her husband's group, and separation from her descent group,—she has no social and personal independent locus in terms of the structure. It is an interesting fact that the most extreme scheme of highly institutionalized unilineal systems can be seen among societies of pre-industrialized high civilization. These schemes are structurally opposed to those of the system of the moiety

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[1] Fortes touches this point in his paper (Fortes, 1959, p. 208).

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arrangement, such as the Garo and the Murngin, where both wife and husband keep important social positions as representatives of each descent group.

Leaving the Garo and the Nayar types, the following discussion deals with the implications of the differences between the Khasi type and the Ashanti type. The degree of function of the two lines *A* and *B*, is related to the residential arrangement. A household of the Khasi type includes the matrilineage women and either their husbands or brothers—brother's wives are excluded as a rule. A household of the Ashanti type includes the matrilineage men and either their wives or sisters—sister's husbands are excluded as a rule. Among the Khasi as I have already explained (p. 127), a woman and her brother's wife are never found as members of a common household, while among the Ashanti, as Fortes states, a man and his wife's brother are never found as members of a common household. In the former, since a woman is the centre of the matrilineage, her husband stands socially closer to her matrilineage than she does to his—the husband shares the matrilineage dwelling, while a man being a peripheral member, his wife is excluded as a rule from his matrilineage residence (hence predominantly uxorilocal);[1] the Ashanti type examplifies exactly the opposite case (predominantly virilocal or avunculocal).

The crucial point in which lies the difference between the Khasi and Ashanti types is the rule of inheritance. In matrilineal systems, as a rule, the ancestral property is inherited by the matrilineal descent group. The starting point of the difference is really in the ways of inheritance of the *acquired property* particularly by the husband. So long as a man remains with his matrilineage members, both types show no difference. The crucial difference appears in the married life. In the Khasi type, if a man builds an independent house in which to live with his wife and children, that house and his acquired property during his matrimonial life automatically belong to and are inherited by his wife and children. On the other hand, in the Ashanti type, if a man builds an independent house in which to live with his wife and children, that house and his acquired property belong as a rule to him and are inherited by his matrilineal group, not by his wife and children. In case of divorce or death of a spouse, the difference between the Khasi and the Ashanti types appears most clearly: in the former, it is the husband who leaves, and in the latter it is the wife and children who leave. Hence the residence pattern reflects

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[1] Among the Yao-Cewa group, which I classify into the Khasi type, a senior brother who is selected for the position of head of a sororal family, takes his wife with him. This virilocal marriage should be considered as an exceptional case applied to only such a particular member. Such special arrangement is also found among the Nayar where duolocal arrangement is general rule.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7
Garo AR5

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these rules, as the Khasi type tends to a uxorilocal arrangement, whil
the Ashanti type tends to a virilocal or avunculocal arrangement

In the Khasi type, the residential arrangement is the decisive facto
for a man's economic achievement. The men, though they keep clos
social and ritual ties with their matrilineage, are divorced economicall
from their matrilineal descent group.[2] On the other hand, in th
Ashanti type, where the matrilineal rule is the decisive factor, me
keep strong social, ritual and economic ties with their descent grou
at the expense of the women's and children's residential mobility
However, these women are not like men of the Khasi type; as amon
the Ashanti, women mostly go back to their matrilineage at a la
stage of their married life. In the case of the Trobriands, the wi
stays all her married life at her husband's house while her sons g
back to her matrilineage, and her daughters leave for their husband
house at their marriage. This can be considered as the exact opposi
of what happens in the Khasi type. The matrilineage represente
by men keeps its function and solidarity at the expense of the wome
There, the female line (mother-daughter) is broken, in practice, b
the residential arrangement, as was broken the male line (mothe
brother-sister's son) in the Khasi type. The actual tie of the Tr
briand wife to her matrilineage is maintained through the presen
her brothers send her, not through mother, sister or daughter. Th
of the Khasi husband is maintained through his youngest sister
niece, not through his brother or nephew. Thus Trobriand wiv
and Khasi husbands are marginal members of the matrilineage. The
facts show that they sacrifice either the male (*B*) or the female (
line to the co-habitation of wife and husband. Unless they have
structural arrangement like that of the Garo, the co-residence of t
married couple is the crucial factor which modifies the matriline
system.

The Ashanti manifest great unstability in this respect, since th
do not like to sacrifice either line *A* or *B*, though actually line *A*
much weaker than *B*. The mother wishes to be with her daught
and son, while the mother's brother wishes to be with his siste
son, yet they do wish to have co-habitation in their marriage—co
bining theoretically opposed factors. This is also the case whi
I found among the Nayar in the transitional stage of the disinteg

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1. These arguments do not mean that all members of a society act in
same way; in any society, considerable variations in residential pattern
found in individual cases. What is important here is the model, and the ori
tation of ideas of the people, the pattern of which is usually followed by
majority of the people in a given society, at a given time.

[2] Among the Khasi, though the authority of the *iing* may keep the accou
and manage his sister's property, his acquired property through his wife's fi
or his independent economic activity definitely go to his wife and children.

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tion of the matrilineal system (see Nakane, 1958/B and 1962). In 171
comparison with the Ashanti, the Khasi or the Trobriand type gain 182
considerable stability by sacrificing either *A* or *B* line, which is one
of the possible ways of preserving the matrilineal system along with 611
the practice of co-habitation of the married couple.

Another solution of the conflicting situation in such a society is the practice of cross-cousin marriage, as in the case of the Ashanti, which brings two conflicting factors together, the matrilineage and the family of procreation. In this case, the cross-cousin marriage tends to take place between the first cross-cousins centred around each man. Fortes states, "Cross-cousin marriage most often occurs between the children of full siblings or of uterine first cousins . . . cross-cousin marriage offers a possibility of reconciling the conflicting influences of conjugal, parental, and matrilineal kinship ties" (1950, p. 282). This is quite different from the cross-cousin marriage of the Garo, because among the latter, the cross-cousin marriage being practised as the basis of the whole structure of society, it makes no difference whether a cross-cousin is first or classificatory. In the case of the Ashanti and other matrilineal systems of a similar type, such as the Mayombe and the Kongo, it is considered most desirable to enter into a first cross-cousin marriage; classificatory cross-cousin marriage, such as among the Garo, does not make much sense. Moreover, the cases of cross-cousin marriage tend to take place among comparatively wealthy members in a society (see Rattray, 1927, Chapter XXIX). If one has no property in the Ashanti type society, then cross-cousin marriage has not much meaning.

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The cross-cousin marriage of matrilineal systems has been often referred to as being the solution to the conflicting situations of a man as a husband and as a brother. I suggest here that this can be applied to the matrilineal system of the Ashanti type; not to those of the Khasi type where men have already given up the role of forming the central core of the matrilineage. In these societies, the solution is already given through the sacrifice of one line. There are no conflicting economic factors, though men are still in a situation of social conflict between their matrilineage and family of procreation. This hypothesis is confirmed empirically by the fact that there are no prescribed or preferential cross-cousin marriages among the Khasi, the Hopi, the Zuni, the Trukese and the Negri Sembilan Malay,[1] where a man is not in economic conflict with his matrilineage and family of procreation. His nephews are already outside his economic

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[1] "In arranging marriages the preference is for someone 'near'. As cross-cousins are the nearest possible naturally a large number of these marriages occur . . . This preference, however, is not explicitly institutionalised . . ." (Swift, 1958, p. 156).

K scope; due to uxorilocal marriage, they have no right over his residence 9 and his acquired property. Naturally the maternal uncle becomes 171 far less important than in the Ashanti type.

182 Among the Yao, which I classified as belonging to the Khasi type, 611 Mitchell states that in spite of the emphasis laid on cross-cousin marriage by his informants, real or classificatory cross-cousins are found in only 15 per cent of 103 first marriages (Mitchell, 1956, p. 200). The functional importance of cross-cousin marriage among the Yao is particularly evident in the minority (headmen of villages or lineages) who practise virilocal marriage[1] in a society where a uxorilocal arrangement is the general rule; as in the case of the Ashanti, cross-cousin marriage functions as a solution to two conflicting tendencies: matrilineality and virilocality. The Trobriands, though they belong to the Ashanti type, demonstrate the same structural analogy to the Khasi type, though in reverse. Among Trobriand commoners there is no preference for cross-cousin marriage. The much discussed cross-cousin marriage of the Trobriand aristocrats should be considered as the exception, as has already been examined by Leach (1958, p. 139). In this regard the Yao and the Trobriands produce a picture somewhat similar to the Ashanti type, among the minority of society, though the general practice bears similar features with that of the Khasi type.

It has become clear that cross-cousin marriage is closely related to the type of residence, i.e. virilocality, combined with economic factors. Furthermore, the cross-cousin marriage signifies the political importance of the maternal uncle as lineage head. Thus the Khasi type and the Ashanti type represent alternative arrangements to the different locus of the core of the functional body, the matrilineal descent group.

## II

K The preceding section has made clear different types of matrilineal 9 systems as far as the *internal* structure of the descent group is concerned. 171 This section deals with the relation of the descent group to the *external* organization.

182 Both the Garo and the Khasi follow a unilineal system, but they 613 do not have what is called "segmentary lineage" organization, which has been much discussed in the African field. As generally understood,

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[1] Richards states: among the Yao-Cewa group, a cross-cousin marriage is likely to be found between a daughter of a head (male) of a descent group and his sister's son (Richards, 1950, p. 235). Mitchell states that Yao cross-cousin marriage is one of the solutions for the conflict between the principle of uxorilocal marriage and the principle of male leadership of the lineage (Mitchell, 1956, p. 144).

lineage is a corporate unilineal descent group of which the members K
can establish demonstrable genealogical relationships to each other. G
According to Firth, "lineage is essentially a unilineal descent group 171
with some corporate functions, normally related by segmentary process 182
to other descent groups of the same type, and with them usually cover-
ing the entire society" (1957, p. 4). The Garo and the Khasi can then 613
be said to have the lineage, but to lack its segmentary organization
which *normally* is found in a unilineal society. Both social structures
exemplify the importance of the residence as a functional unit, against
the wider descent group which may be called the lineage group.

In the case of the Garo, the localized lineage is expressed in terms G
of the village (or group of villages) whose land bears the name of the 182
localized lineage. However, it is the village which acts as the functional
corporate body, the economic and ritual unit, not the group of members 613
of the localized lineage. The village theoretically consists of the mem- 621
bers of the two localized lineages, as represented in the headman and
his wife respectively. Practically, though it bears the name of a
particular lineage to which the wife of the headman belongs, as also
usually the majority of the inhabitants, it includes many other lineage
members as well as the traditional two lineages. Therefore, the lineage
is not, in this sense, an exclusive corporate unit with a ritual and
economic function, though it gives a theoretical framework to the
structure.

In the case of the Khasi, the lineage is found only on a household K
scale, centred in the woman, the property owner with members having 182
direct matrilineal kinship ties to the former, such as her brothers,
elder sisters, sons and daughters, who may or may not reside in the 592
same household—the members of the *iing*. Beyond this unit (the 613
*iing*) one can hardly find any functional organization based on the
descent system. In other words, the lineage becomes a functional
unit only at the level of the household, e.g., the lowest level of segmen-
tation of the descent group, and it lacks wider external organization
by the same principle. The clan is considered rather as a ritual
conception implying exogamy, not as an organized body of kin.

These phenomena contrast sharply with the Hopi and the Ashanti K
social organization, where lineage organization has crucial importance G
wider than on a household level. Many factors can be considered in 171
this connection. First of all, the locus of property and ceremonial 182
unit are the most distinctive features. Among the Khasi, property
and ceremonial units are always found in an *iing*, represented by the 613
youngest daughter's household, while that of the Hopi and the Ashanti 592
are in a wider lineage organization in which members of many house-
holds are usually included. The Zuni pattern seems also similar to
that of the Khasi. The difference between the Khasi and Zuni lies

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in the rule of inheritance; the former follows unigeniture (ultimogeniture), while the latter does not. Therefore, the number of members of a Zuni household is naturally larger than that of the Khasi.[1] Against the average number of a Khasi household, four to five, that of the Zuni is seven and a half to eight persons (Kroeber, 1917, p. 124). Among the Khasi, sisters separate through marriage in every generation, leaving the youngest in their natal house; while Zuni sisters may stay together even after their marriages. Kroeber states:

> "The house belongs to the women born of the family. They come into the world, pass their lives, and within the walls they die . . . Now and then a new dwelling may be built by all the inmates, or for a girl of the house by an enterprising husband; but in general the same walls, or reerected ones on the same spot (*ibid.*, pp. 47-48), . . . It is true that a Zuni 'house' often contains what we should regard as two or three households, but as long as it includes only one used hearth, and all natives insist that the two or three households are a single one" (*ibid.*, p. 124).

The internal composition of the household may differ from that of the Khasi, but the household in terms of the important institutionalized unit, is very similar to the Khasi. Li An-che states that "characteristics of a joint household based on the kinship principle stand out very strikingly" (Li, 1937, p. 75). Eggan's statement brings Zuni social organization much closer to the issue. He writes, "In terms of Kroeber's table it would seem that the Zuni tend to equate a lineage with a household, except in cases of recent expansion or budding off" (Eggan, 1950, p. 189). He gives a further illuminating analysis of this point:

> "We have noted that the lineage principle, . . . also provides a mechanism for the inheritance of ceremonial duties and obligations and the transmission and preservation of fetishes and other ceremonial paraphernalia. In Zuni this inheritance is phrased in terms of the household, but it is clear that it is the lineage segment born into the household that is important. This lineage segment, or at least the female line thereof, also owns land and holds it in trust for succeeding generations, to be worked by the men who marry into the household" (*ibid.*, p. 217).

Another similar equation of lineage and household, comparable to that of the Khasi and the Zuni, is found among the Trukese. According to Goodenough (1951):

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[1] This involves not only the difference of the number of members to a household but also the relation between the members of a descent group. As already discussed, the core of the descent group among the Khasi, is the pair of statuses: the owner of the property (the youngest sister) and the authority (a brother), not the sibling group altogether (see p. 131) as happens in other matrilineal systems appearing in this discussion. In regard to the unigeniture succession itself, the Garo share the same system as the Khasi, though it appears to operate differently by reason of the structural difference of organization.

> "In aboriginal times they used to be associated with most lineages a dwelling house, *jimw* (p. 67) . . . *jimw* is the corporate property of the lineage or descent line whose women live in it, but it is normally built by their husbands" (p. 68).

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Here, it is clear that a household provides the major locus of a lineage. 592
In other words, a lineage is a corporate property group with a common 613
residence. This is also the case of the Nayar *tarwad* and the Minangkabau *parui*, though in these cases the household excludes the spouses of its members, while with the Khasi, the Zuni, and the Trukese the spouses (in most cases, the husbands) share the residence.

Though they may differ in scale and size from one society to another, as well as from one household to another, the functional lineage founded upon residence has thus a similar range in all of these systems. For convenience sake, I tentatively term this type of lineage "household-lineage,"[1] as opposed to that of the Hopi and the Ashanti, which might be termed "segmentary-lineage."

The average number of Khasi and Garo household members is four to five, that of the Zuni seven and a half to eight as stated above, the Trukese is eighteen (three to thirty-four in Romonum Island, according to Goodenough), while the Nayar range from thirty to two hundred. These differences, I think, mostly depend on the economic (and environmental) situation; they should not be regarded as structural, except for the Garo and the Khasi, which, because of the unigeniture rule, have smaller and fairly uniform households. The wide range of variation in composition which we observe among the Trukese and the Nayar is due in reality to economic and environmental factors: the more favorable the circumstances, the larger the unit.

The co-residential group and the property unit do not always necessarily correspond. One property group may consist of more than two independent residences. But even in such cases, the lineage is likely to be found in a group which formed a co-residential unit in the recent past, and which should be considered as marginal cases, derived from the recent fission of a group—it is a lineage in process of fission not a constant kin-group based on wider organization such as we find among the Ashanti and the Hopi. Usually such a lineage ceases to function shortly after it loses its common property, which usually follows closely upon the fission of the residential unit. Thus, in the course of time a once-recognized lineage group disappears into the common sea of the clan, which represents only a ritual and exogamous unit. In some cases, even this clan loses its function, as happens among the Nayar and the Minangkabau, where the lineage which

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[1] It should be noted that it does not mean that the lineage consists of household members, but that the lineage solidarity is found around the range of a household scale.

K corresponds (or corresponded in the near past) to the co-residential
9 property-group itself becomes an exogamic unit, disregarding the wider
171 unit of the clan. Structurally it can be said that in these societies
182 a lineage cannot exercise its full function unless it has a common residence based on a property unit.

592 In contrast to these societies, I cannot help but think that the
613 Ashanti and the Hopi belong to a different type. Both Fortes and Eggan lay great emphasis on the descent principle, based on the
000 ethnographic data of the Ashanti and of the Hopi respectively. The best examples of statements concerning this issue are the accounts in which both stress their disagreement with Kroeber's argument of 1938 in favour of the priority of local residence relationships over those of descent, under the title of "Basic and secondary patterns of social structure."

Fortes states:

> "A lineage cannot easily act as a corporate group if its members can never get together for the conduct of their affairs. It is not surprising therefore to find that the lineage in African societies is generally locally anchored; but it is not necessarily territorially compact or exclusive. A compact nucleus may be enough to act as the local center for a group that is widely dispersed. I think it would be agreed that lineage and locality are independently variable and how they interact depends on other factors in the social structure. As I interpret the evidence, local ties are of secondary significance, *pace* Kroeber, for local ties do not appear to give rise to structural bonds in and of themselves. There must be common political or kinship or economic or ritual interests for structural bonds to emerge. Again spatial dispersion does not immediately put an end to lineage ties or to the ramifying kin ties found in cognatic systems like that of the Lozi. For legal status, property, office and cult act centripetally to hold dispersed lineages together and scattered kindred" (Fortes, 1953, p. 36).

Eggan states:

> "For the Hopi the kinship structure is centered primarily around the lineage; the household relationships are secondary (Eggan, 1950, p. 173).
>
> "Furthermore, it is the lineage and clan, rather than the household group, which is intrusted with lands and ceremonies and which is considered to own the house itself. Important as are the ties of residence and subsistence associations, they are not the key groupings in Hopi estimation—or in terms of our interpretation.
>
> "Kroeber explicitly leaves kinship out of account in his analysis of 'basic and secondary patterns of social structure,' but in a sense kinship is more fundamental than either patterns of residence or formal grouping. Our analysis of Hopi kinship has suggested that both the household and the lineage organizations are encompassed in the kinship system. And it is clear that the kinship system is organized in terms of the lineage principle rather than in terms of residence" (*ibid.*, p. 133).

These arguments seem to me to refer more to a difference of social organization than to a theoretical contrast. On the basis of my own

field work as well as on the accounts of various matrilineal systems, 000
I feel strongly that there must be different types of systems which may be distinguished as "household-lineage" and "segmentary-lineage". Fortes and Eggan postulate the pre-eminence of the descent principle over residence. Though this may be the case among the Ashanti and the Hopi, it does not fit the cases belonging to what I call "household-lineage" type. Firth's argument emphasizing the importance of rights to group membership being associated with locality, fits very well with the latter case. With more precision and subtilty than Kroeber, he argues that "residence by itself does not give title to descent-group membership, but land rights established by descent-group membership tend to remain operational only through residence" (Firth 1957, p. 7).

I believe there are crucial differences between these household-lineage type and segmentary-lineage type organizations. The technical process of fission into segments is similar in both types. But in the former, once a segmented group attains autonomy, the relation between the segments will easily be forgotten after a few generations, as it has no significant social implication. Among these societies, people's genealogical memory outside the residential group is surprisingly poor. This empirical fact also suggests a different structure from that of the segmentary system.

In both types of society the internal organization of a household is the same, but it differs externally. Eggan states that "Kroeber's and Parsons' statements about the lack of system in regard to Zuni kinship indicate judgement from some arbitrary standard" and adds "The concept of the lineage provides a bridge between the household
and the clan" (Eggan, *ibid.*, p. 197). I cannot agree with this. In K
fact, my study of the Garo, the Khasi and the Nayar corresponds 9
very well to the Zuni situation described by Kroeber and Parsons. 171
There are matrilineal systems which lack a bridge between the house- 182
hold and the clan.

Then what is it that makes the difference between the two types 592
of organization in similar unilineal systems? I am not sure that I can 613
produce at present effective hypotheses on this issue. However, empirical facts show that the household-lineage type organization is likely to be found among more complicated societies or in a society with considerable mobility. This we gather also if we compare the village
compositions of the Hopi and the Zuni. In the case of the Khasi, K
we saw that there was considerable mobility in population even in [166]
remote villages, so that we easily understand that in such a condition lineage membership hardly maintained itself. This seems to agree
with the view put forth by Fortes on segmentary systems. Fortes 000
says the limits of the spread or span of internal segmentation of the

000 lineage "are set by the condition of stability in the social structure which it is one of the chief functions of lineage systems 'to maintain'" (1953, p. 32). The Nayar and Minangkabau are highly institutionalized cases with a rich economy and a high agricultural civilization, and among matrilineal peoples they undoubtedly appear as most integrated and complex. Then it may be suggested that the household-lineage type organization appears in less stable or more complexed societies than in that of segmentary systems.

With reference to this issue, the analysis of kinship terminology seems to throw a certain amount of light. Eggan, comparing the Zuni kinship terminology to that of the Hopi, concludes "there is a marked structural resemblance to the Crow type in general and the Hopi system in particular" (1950, p. 182). Resemblance between the Zuni and the Hopi terminology is found particularly in Ego's generation: father's sister's son is 'father'; father's sister's daughter is 'father's sister'; and mother's brother's son and daughter are designated by the term 'child'—a terminology usually accepted as characteristic of the Crow type. However, Zuni terminology differs from that of the Hopi (the Crow type) in the following two points: first, the above mentioned cross-cousins termed 'father,' 'father's sister' and 'child' are also called by sibling terms (according to Kroeber, 1917, pp. 75-81). Schneider and Roberts state, "informants reported that sibling terms were most commonly applied to mother's brother's son, mother's brother's daughter and father's sister's son; that father's sister's daughter was called *kuku* (father's sister) as often as *kawu* (elder sister)" (1956, p. 11). Secondly, the lineal distinction manifested in the terms for cross-cousins has no structural continuity, as in the case of the Hopi; it disappears by the child's generation: against Eggan's prediction on the Zuni terms as belonging to the Crow type, Schneider and Roberts found that father's sister's son's child had no term (Eggan: brother and sister), father's sister's daughter's son was 'grand father,' 'elder brother' (Eggan: father), and descendants of persons belonging in the above categories had no term.[1]

Taking these facts into account, I suggest that Zuni kinship terminology has a framework of the generation type with some inclination towards the Crow type, since the lineal distinction of collateral lines can be seen only in limited generations, in contrast to that of the Hopi where differentiation continues from generation to generation. Furthermore, this distinction is not as sharply made as in the Crow type, because cross-cousins are also, and more often, termed 'sibling.'

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[1] They conclude that "It is neither pure lineage in type nor pure generation but best be described as 'modified' Crow," in other words "Zuni terminology is modified lineage, rather than 'pure lineage' in type" (Schneider & Roberts, ibid., p. 22).

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This Zuni type kinship terminology is also found among the Trukese: its basic framework is generation type, and cross-cousins have additional terms which suggest the principle of the Crow type (one's father's sister's children classed as parents and one's mother's brother's children as children).[1] Such duality of terms for cross-cousins in a framework of the generation type was also the case of the Khasi, as I described in pp. 117-118. On the co-existence of alternative terms and irregular usages and certain lineage principle in Zuni kinship terminology, Schneider and Roberts note that its weak corporate character is reflected in the failure of the Zuni terminology either to segregate or lump members of contiguous lineages, and in the subordinate position of the ordering or classifying function of kinship terms. And they distinguish the Zuni case, as weakly corporate groups, from societies like the Hopi, as strongly corporate groups.

I consider that the crucial structural importance of the differences between the Hopi type and the Zuni type lies in the method of recruiting kin into a social unit. The Zuni type is used within a comparatively small unit, like a household, because the members of kin-groups which are included within second generations from Ego correspond to the limit of a domestic unit, while the Hopi type is used to recruit kin in a much wider way, since lineal differentiation extends from generation to generation, with a clear demarcation of the whole population of a society as a result. This reminds me of Eggan's statement on Hopi kinship terminology. He writes: "From the standpoint of kinship structure these 'vertical' groupings of kindred represent collective or generalized relationships with definite positions and obligations. For the Hopi the kinship structure is centered primarily around the lineage; the household relationships are secondary" (Eggan, *ibid.*, p. 113). My hypothesis can be supported by the empirical fact that the kinship terminology of all matrilineal systems discussed as the household-lineage type exemplify the same structure as the Zuni type, that is, basically generation type with some tendency to the Crow or Iroquois type: lineal differentiation doubled with sibling term is restricted to the second generation from Ego.

However, this argument does not tend to prove that restricted kinship type corresponds to household-lineage structure, and vertical type to segmentary-lineage structure, but only that certain correlations can be observed. The Ashanti present a critical case for these arguments. The function of Ashanti lineages as described by Fortes

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[1] See Goodenough, 1951, pp. 95-98. Goodenough explains this dual usage of Trukese kinship terminology in terms of Ego's relation to his own matrilineage and his father's lineage, as Ego is a potential heir of both lineages: the terms of the generation type are used for the former relation and the terms modified from the Crow type are for the latter relation.

000 has a striking resemblance to that of the Hopi as described by Eggan. The lineage, having segmentary structure, performs strong functions as a land ownership and religious unit. However, from Rattray's account, we understand that all grandchildren of matrilineage as well as children through the male line, are called *nana*, a term which is also applied to grandparent's generation. This means that the lineal classification does not extend beyond the second generation from Ego; such a classification corresponds to the Zuni-type, but not to the Hopi type.

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Coming back to the discussion of the correlation between the restricted type of kinship terminology and household-lineage, we should consider another important aspect of its bilateral character. In these societies can be observed considerable bilateral tendencies reaching beyond the household-lineage. As I have made clear in the description of the Khasi, the social and economic relationship with outside members of the household are no different towards people who belong to the same descent or clan than towards those who belong to an entirely different kin-group, except as concerns directly related kindred, such as sibling and mother and children. The matrilineal group wider than the *iing* has no exclusive function at all except avoidance of marriage. In this level of arganization, there is no extention of the organizing principle of the matrilineal descent system. For instance, households A, B and C are matrilineally related to each other (A is the original and B and C the outcome of the fission of A). Such matrilineal links have no exclusive features that mark them off from other households unrelated through the matrilineal descent line; actual matrilineal links are minimized in their value and function in regard to relations between households. Such characteristics of this kind of organization must be corelated with the existence of an inheritance case, in which the matrilineal rule is distorted as I mentioned elsewhere (p. 121): if there is no daughter to succeed the *iing*, the son can inherit the acquired property of the *iing*, thus creating by transmission of the property, an entirely new *iing* (of his wife), in which no matrilineal link is established. Likewise in Truk, a son is the potential heir of his father's lineage, and frequency of patrilocal arrangements as alternatives—transmission of the property on the establishment of a new property-residential group—does not always follow the strict matrilineal line. These facts point to considerable bilateral characteristics outside the household. The relationships among households are not organized upon the matrilineal principle.

000 Kroeber's emphasis on the bilateral character of the Zuni society should be regarded as important in this respect:

> "Upon her (*Zuni* woman) permanent occupancy of the house rests the matrilinear custom of the tribe. But kinship is thoroughly and equally bila-

> teral. Take away from the Zuni woman her possession of the home, and her apparent preeminence in relationship vanishes . . . (Kroeber, 1917, p. 48). The Zuni, a matrilinear and clan people, approximate much more nearly to the English scheme, as regards reciprocity and consistency in the use of categories" (*ibid.*, p. 81).

And Eggan observes that "Kroeber believes that common residence and friendship count for more than clan membership, in daily life at least" (1950, p. 186). Schneider and Roberts also touch upon the bilateral character of the Zuni and state that "in the formal sense in which the terms are used today, however, we must still regard Zuni as matrilineal in descent and not bilateral. Yet the Zuni pattern of integration is 'bilateral' or 'Ego centered' in type and not unilineal" (1956, p. 21). I rather suggest, in interpreting the Zuni situation, that the lineage principle is well maintained within a household scale, but that outside it, predominant bilateral tendencies come into action. Among the Nayar, also the relationship of outside *tarwad* do not show a unilineal structure.

In societies of the household-lineage type, a functional unit is demarcated in the first place by common property and residence, which cut off clearly other members who may be included by the descent principle. This demarcation is so clear-cut that the wider group, which may be recruited by descent principle, can hardly have a function in itself. The lineage, in the sense of wider descent units, may be vaguely seen, but its composition is immaterial to its structure. Hence the unilineal structural principle is much weakened, creating bilateral features beyond the household (property owning descent group). Therefore, the crucial difference between household-lineage and segmentary-lineage is the predominant bilateral characteristic of the former outside of the household, while in the latter, the unilineal structure inside of a household is theoretically extended to the wider organization, which may be regarded as a more rigorously structured unilineal system. The bilateral characteristics of household-lineage type correspond functionnally to the scheme of a bilateral system such as the Maori, as expressed by Firth who writes: "that descent and the formal structure of the kinship grouping can be understood only by reference to residence and land holdings" (1957, p. 4).

Fortes (1959), considering ambilateral descent groups, such as the Maori *hapu* described by Firth (1929) and the kind of landowning groups described by Goodenough (1955), in contrast to lineage type descent groups, expresses his view to designate the former type as 'kindred groups' and the latter as 'descent groups' on the ground that "This (the former) would emphasize the fact that they are not recruited on the principle of perpetual succession but on the more general principle of filiative kin right." The crucial difference is defined by

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi
Garo AR5

000 Fortes as follows: "it is the 'stock'—that is, the estate—and the function of the organization in the external politico-jural domain that make it a corporate unit, not the mode of recruiting members" (Fortes, *ibid.*, p. 212). The delineation of the unit which Fortes calls "kindred groups" is very much similar to that of household-lineage. A corporate group based on "stock" and residence is not only characteristic of bilateral society; it is also found in unilineal societies, but in them the unit is clearly always a "descent group" in Fortes' terms, though the external organization be different from the "descent group" of the segmentary system.

## III

All matrilineal systems discussed above have a basic common structure: the composition of a corporate property group is structured by matrilineal descent principles. There are some peoples with a matrilineal system in certain respects, who do not share this basic common structure: the property group is not always composed of a matrilineal descent group, nor has it any institutionalized organization with a matrilineal principle of inheritance, such as we observed among the Garo. For instance, the Bemba, the plateau Tonga, the Bisa, the Ila, the Lamba in Africa, the Siuai of the Solomon Islands, and the Majuro of the Marshall Islands present such features; for the sake of convenience I term these *the Bemba type*.

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The essential difference between the Bemba type and the other matrilineal systems discussed in previous sections, lies in the fact that though they follow the matrilineal *succession* rule, they do not always follow the matrilineal *inheritance* rule. In other words, though the membership of a *matrilineal group* is acquired by matrilineal descent right, the membership of a *property group* is acquired through ambilateral (not always by matrilineal) descent or affinal links. Hence, there are no distinguishable general patterns of internal structure of a property group as expressed by the criteria of two lines, *A* (female) and *B* (male). However, as a whole, property groups tend to bear more matrilineal features than that of bilateral systems like those of the Maori or the Iban, because of the existence of the matrilineal succession rule. Indeed, in some cases a property group consists of a matrilineal descent group.

In the absence of a strict matrilineal inheritance rule, considerable variations of residence pattern and composition appear within the same community. Virilocal, avuncolocal, uxorilocal and neolocal residences are found equally within the same society, as the residence pattern of a newly married couple is determined by various given circumstances.

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When classifying Majuro couples according to residence, Spoehr found 23 cases on the husband's land; 18 cases on the wife's land; 6 cases on land belonging to the husband's relatives in the household, though he himself did not have a right in the land; or 3 cases on land belonging to the wife's relatives in the household, though she did not have a right in the land. And he writes "this indicates a very considerable flexibility in the relation of household composition to land rights and residence after marriage" (Spoehr, 1949, p. 116).

Oliver found that the residence patterns in Siuai were subject to considerable variations. "Their order of numerical importance is: predominantly patrilocal; evenly mixed patrilocal and matrilocal; predominantly matrilocal; predominantly avunco-virilocal" (Oliver, 1955, p. 237). The more important factors entering into choice of residence are:

1. While a father is alive, his sons tend to set up their households in his hamlet.
2. If a man is wealthy and influential, both his sons and sons-in-law are likely to establish their households in his hamlet. In fact, the influential man exercises a strong pull on other relatives as well.
3. Upon a man's death, his co-resident sons and sons-in-law tend to move to their matrilineage centers, where their own maternal uncles may be residing, unless they acquire important rights in the deceased's landholdings.
4. A wealthy matrilineage or sub-matrilineage is also a magnet, resulting, in many instances, in matrilocal and avunco-virilocal residence.
5. Close friendship between kinsmen, especially between brothers and between classificatory *brothers-in-law*, frequently induces them to reside in the same hamlet. (Oliver, *ibid.*, p. 237)

Among the peoples which I classified into the Bemba type, the similar flexibility in deciding residence at marriage also appears in case of divorce or of death of a spouse. In such cases the one who has married into the group usually leaves, but the children decide themselves where they will go. In the case of virilocal arrangement, if the husband dies, the general heir chosen from among his matrilineal kin should assume his name and his position within the family, marrying his widow and fathering his children, which is a very similar arrangement to that of the Ashanti. However, the widow may refuse to marry her late husband's successor, either staying with her children and being allowed to retain her field, or going off to live as an affiliated member in the family of some relative (see Colson, 1951, pp. 127-128; Richards, 1950, p. 226). Thus, there is some tendency towards a matrilineal arrangement of the Ashanti type such as the widow leaving the house or the levirate derived from virilocal residence, but there are alternative solutions which contradict the matrilineal arrangement: the widow and the children may remain in the house and enjoy the property over which the deceased man's matrilineal kin have right. Thus the inheritance rule is very flexible.

000 Such variety in residential arrangements and such flexibility in inheritance rule complicates considerably the composition of the residential unit when a property group (residential domestic unit) grows. Richards gives an interesting illustrative description of the formation of a Bemba residential unit:

> "The Bemba bridegroom starts his married life as a stranger in his wife's village, but since his daughters remain with him for some years after marriage he builds up a grand-family composed of his daughters, their husbands, and their children. In some cases he is able to persuade his sons-in-law to remain permanently with him, while in others he is even able to keep his sons in his own village. In time some of his sister's sons, with their wives, will choose to come and settle with him, so that he will be head of a group of rather heterogeneous composition" (Richards, *ibid.*, p. 227).

Here we find a man's wife's matrilineal kin (his daughters and sons, including the daughters' descendants); his own matrilineal kin (his sisters' sons); and the third matrilineal sets (his sons' wives and his sister's sons'wives). Such a mixed composition of a residential unit may never be found among societies belonging to those types previously discussed; such residential composition would be impossible if the matrilineal principle was functioning strongly in the structure of the actual property group.

Thus, the Bemba type presents an outstanding structural difference from the other types of matrilineal systems in which the matrilineal inheritance rule was the decisive factor for the formation of the residence unit. It is clear that in the Bemba type, both a man and a woman are fairly free from the economic control of his and her matri-
171 lineal group, and their relations are somewhat like those of the husband
182 of the Khasi type and the wife of the Ashanti type. Therefore, the
592 conflicts between one's matrilineal group and family of procreation are minimized, particularly in the economic sphere.
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This analysis throws much light on the following remarks of Richards bearing on different aspects of the similar formation of descent groups among the Yao and the Bemba.

> "The head of a Yao village of this sort (taking his wife to his matrilineage residence) thus has authority over his wife's children and over those of his sisters, but the position of the wife's children seems to be clearly differentiated from that of the sister's children, and Mitchell speaks of a traditional hostility between them. I never saw evidence of such hostility in Bemba villages, which also often contain a man's children and his sister's children" (Richards, *ibid.*, p. 235).

This difference should really be ascribed to the structural difference between the Khasi type (the Yao) and the Bemba type. In the former the matrilineal structural force is strongly functioning in the residential group, whereas in the latter it is minimized.

000 Within such a structural framework it is quite understandable that the predominance of virilocal arrangements, coupled with male authority as husband/father, are found. All observers of these societies have noted this feature. Among the plateau Tonga and the Bemba particularly, male authority is outstanding.

> "Men are free to move and to form their own homesteads because they acquire rights over their wives which permit them to remove these women from the protection of their kin . . . As head of the household, the husband occupies a position comparable in many respects to that which falls to men in patrilineal societies" (Colson, 1958, p. 61).
>
> "With the marriage the husband obtains—but only for the probationary period—rights over his wife's labour, the right to control her movements, and rights to her sexually. He is the father of any children born to her, whether or not he begets them . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 101).
>
> "So long as the household contains a married couple, it is theoretically under the authority of the husband. The wife and her children form the house, the *inganda*, but the husband is known as the *singanda*, 'the owner of the house' . . ." (*ibid.*, p. 105).
>
> "Once the young man is admitted to the family he is free to move his wife and children to his own village should he desire to do so" (Richards, *ibid.*, p. 225).
>
> "This is a male dominant society and, even though descent is reckoned through the mother, the wife is very much under the control of her husband even while he is an outsider in his wife's village" (*ibid.*, p. 225).

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The husband/father's authority was also observed among other matrilineal systems under certain conditions, as already fully discussed in the chapters on the Garo and the Khasi, and more predominantly among societies of the Ashanti type where the residential pattern was viri-avunculocal. However, the ambilateral structure on the level of the household composition may give more opportunity to create a husband/father authority of a more stable kind, unhampered by matrilineal force.

000 Furthermore, individuals are almost free from the descent principle in establishing their residence. Colson states in her account on the Tonga that a man has complete freedom to choose his residence, and residents in a single neighbourhood need not have kinship ties with one another. In the ordinary round of daily life, membership within a neighbourhood may be of more significance than membership within a matrilineal group (Colson, 1958, pp. 27-28). Oliver describes a similar situation:

> "The out-marrying women and their children acquire provisional rights in tracts where they reside, and ultimately acquire full title to such lands" (Oliver, 1955, p. 116).

It is clear, in these societies, that there are two sets of groups on different levels: a matrilineal group membership of which is acquired

000 through matrilineal descent right, and a residential property group membership of which is acquired through ambilateral descent right and actual residential right. The lineage and the domestic family of Majuro are not the same and should not be considered as synonymous (Spoehr, 1949, p. 160). The Tonga matrilineal groups which are conceived as persisting through time, are not localized and do not form the basis for the homesteads or hamlet (Colson, 1958, p. 61). The Ila recognize the difference between the domestic unit under the authority of the father and the descent unit of which the mother's brother is head. "The clan is your mother's, the family is your father's" (Richards, 1950, p. 240).

The matrilineal group seems to act as a ritual corporate kinship unit, and the residential property group as an economic corporate unit. Ethnographic data inform us about the matrilineal group as follows: a Tonga matrilineal group is "a corporate body since it has a common legal personality vis-à-vis all other similarly organized bodies. Inheritance, succession, provision and sharing of bridewealth, vengeance—though to a very attenuated degree today—and a common ritual responsibility, are functions of the group" (Colson, 1958, p. 16). In Majuro, the lineage is a landholding group and a basic feature of political organization; it also determines the ascribed status of an individual in the old class system, and constitutes a cooperating kinship unit (Spoehr, *ibid.*, p. 158). In Siuai, the matrilineage is a unit of landholding, possession and vengeance, with a common shrine and a common heirloom of shell money, etc. of high value (Oliver, 1955, Chapter 3).

These features would seem to indicate that these matrilineal groups have important economic aspects, which fact contradicts the existence of the property group composed of ambilateral descent with residential right. The answers may be, firstly, that the land-holding right of a matrilineal group is not of an inflexible nature; rather, it is nominal, and much concession is made to the actual co-residential group when a clash occurs between residential and descent rights. Secondly, at the different levels, these two groups, matrilineal group and property group, overlap in their distribution, so that in some cases both groups may coincide: the members of a property group form at the same time a matrilineal group. On these two points no anthropologist who has reported on these societies has given a clear analysis. However, I draw this conclusion from their ethnographic statements.

Spoehr sees in such coincidence of matrilineal group and residential group chance occurrences, resulting primarily from the fact that the living kinfolk in each case happened to fall into a lineage pattern. Interestingly enough, I find from Colson's and Oliver's accounts, that the bigger and more functional matrilineal groups are found as property

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groups, associated with wealth. Among the Tonga, "wealth and power attract kinsmen. The largest matrilineal groups today are those which center upon one of the new class of wealthy farmers or upon a chief whose prospects of inheritance holds the members together" (Colson, 1958, p. 23). Oliver illustrates a case as follows:

> "they (matrilineage people) interact among themselves . . . they corporately claim full title to all the tracts together and do not differentiate between the various tracts except to describe the several ways in which they were acquired.
>
> It is important to comment on the oft-repeated statement of Soni and Siham that all this land will pass intact to their matrilineage descendants. 'Why,' I asked, 'will not other matrilineage acquire portions of it when you die just as you acquired tracts when former owners died?'
>
> 'The difference is that *we* are wealthy,' they answered. 'We are able to provide generous mortuary feasts for ourselves, and need not call upon other matrilineages to contribute; therefore, we do not have to throw away our land' " (Oliver, 1955, pp. 113-114).

In these societies, such matrilineal property groups seem to occur as a result of considerable accumulation of property which attracted kinsmen. Since they have a matrilineal system, one might be justified in approaching a wealthy man through the channel of the membership; in the same way, wealthy men may find in it a convenient excuse to delineate the members who enjoy their wealth. This economic reason seems important. Among the Bemba no strong matrilineal property group is found, and Richards states that "there is thus practically no inheritable wealth amongst these peoples, either in the form of land, stock, or money, and this fact naturally influences profoundly the nature of their residential and kinship groups" (Richards, 1950, p. 222).

I am, therefore, reluctant to consider that this kind of matrilineage corporate property group represents the traditional pattern of organization of this kind of society, and that other attending features are the product of its disintegration. I rather agree with Spoehr's view when he says: "I doubt that the present structure of the Marshallese household can be explained by the assumption that is changing from matrilocal to patrilocal residence, and I am equally doubtful that the family organization was ever highly formalized around maternal lineage" (Spoehr, 1949, p. 117). These matrilineal societies differ in structure from those discussed in the previous sections, but under certain circumstances, such as outstanding accumulation of property, they may become organized along the same lines as other matrilineal system. On another level the matrilineal descent group happened to coincide under most favourable circumstances with an actual property and residence group and formed a more effective and substantial corporate body. It is decidedly the most advantageous and effective way to build up a stronger corporate property group by using the

000 devices of the existing system. This does not necessarily imply that such societies have or had the same organization as other matrilineal societies, but I believe this to be an economic and historical product of the existing structure. I do not question the fact that all these societies are subject to a process of change; but it does seem unnecessary to assume that every factor which happens to be missing nowadays, did, in fact, exist in the past.

K Summing up the above discussion, the essential structural differences
9 between the Bemba type and other matrilineal systems are found
firstly in the internal structure of its property group: "ambilateral"
171 contrasting with the "matrilineal" of the Garo, Nayar, Khasi and
182 Ashanti types. Secondly, in the structure of the wider organization
611 of the residential groups: the clear matrilineal principle is found to
000 act in the composition of matrilineal groups. The focus of the matrilineal operation is quite opposite to that of the household-lineage type. In the latter the bilateral features are met with at the wider organizational level. In the Bemba type, in spite of bilateral features in the composition of the residential property group, the rigorous matrilineal group conception is found in the wider organization. Unlike the case of the segmentary-lineage type, this matrilineal group does not have necessarily a direct and actual economic basis. Perhaps the scale of the Bemba society is small enough to maintain the matrilineal social system without a definite economic basis.

In conclusion, such terms as "matrilineal" (unilineal) and "bilateral" are simply convenient labels for the preliminary classification: they should not be used as contrasting criteria for classifying social structure. The unilineal principle (matrilineal system) works differently in each given society, producing as I have observed different structures. Again, *descent* principle and *residence* (with landholdings or property) are equally important criteria for the analysis of social organization. The preeminence of either descent or residence should not be theoretically opposed in the arguments of anthropologists, for different degrees and levels of both factors are involved in each given society.

K Finally I should like to note that the five major types of matrilineal
9 systems in relation to the internal structure of the property group,
which I presented in this discussion, namely the Garo, the Nayar, the
121 Khasi, the Ashanti and the Bemba types, give theoretical criteria
171 for the analysis. It should not be assumed that all matrilineal systems
182 grouped into the same type present the same structure, but that each
611 possesses the important basic element of its type. Also a system may change from one type to another through important economic changes or migrations: for instance, from the Nayar type to the Ashanti type, or from the Ashanti type to the Bemba type.

# APPENDIX

# SOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM SHELLA AND JATINGA

## SHELLA

Shella is situated on the lowest of the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, 101
bordering on the Sylhet plain of East Pakistan. For centuries the people of
Shella maintained close trading connections with the people of the plain, so 131
that they have been much influenced by the Hindu. They have been to some 439
extent divorced economically and culturally from their own people who live
in the uplands and on higher part of the slopes. Actually, this is a natural 131
result of their geographical location. From Cherrapunjee, the southern edge of 133
the upland Khasi Hills, only a narrow footpath goes down to Shella. The altitude of Cherrapunjee is about 5,000 feet and of Shella from 500 to 1,000 feet, and 487
the distance between them is 8 miles. The path descends very steeply and
is full of hard stones. This difficulty of communication is also why the Hindu
influence did not penetrate the upland Khasi, as in the case of the Jaintia
Hills.[1]

This area has a unique political organization which differs from the majority 632
of Khasi states who are traditionally ruled by the members of the Siem clan.
Shella is organized as a confederation, called 'Shella Confederacy,' and consists 184
of four local villages. The head of the village is called *wadadhar*, and is elected
by the villagers every three years. The number of households of the Shella 622
Confederacy was about 900 in January 1956. The names of the four villages 103
and their *wadadhar* in 1956 were:

551

| *Name of village* | *Name of wadadhar* |
|---|---|
| 1. Shella | Devish Mohan Roy |
| 2. Mushtoh | Ditojou Roy |
| 3. Nongtrai | Orju Roy |
| 4. Tyngnger | Jabuni Roy |

Each village is divided into sections. For instance, Shella village has nine 103
sections: (1) Jasir, (2) Disong, (3) Duba, (4) Jamau, (5) Nongrum, (6) Nongnong, 621

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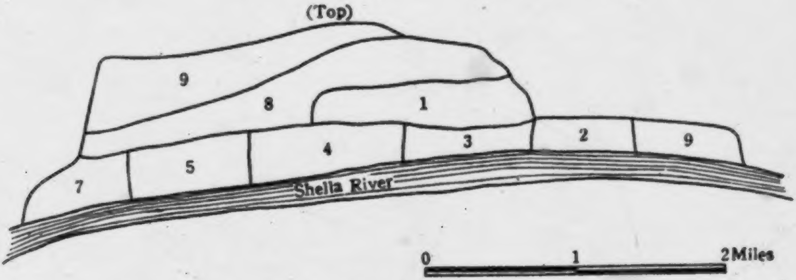
[1] However, Shella was the only way out and the main gateway from the Khasi Hills to the plain; it was here that the British first entered the Khasi Hills. They proceeded from Shella to Cherrapunjee and made the latter headquarters of the Khasi Hills in 1833.

[Shella]

621 (7) Mawrongkhong, (8) Rynsong-kanor, and (9) Sholap, as shown in Map 9.
103 In Shella village the number of households in each section ranges between 10
and 80. Such a section is called *kher*, and was supposed to be the site of house-
614 holds of segments of every *kur* (clan). It seems that Shella village was once
composed of nine different *kur* which could intermarry with each other. However,
621 nowadays, each section, as appeared in my census, has nothing to do with the
178 *kur* as such; it is simply a geographical section. According to the information
which I gathered, there had been a tendency for the same *kur* people to gather
731 within the section, before the great earthquake in 1897 brought considerable
[102]



Map 9. — *Distribution of Sections in Shella Village.*

damages and death to this area: many of them left the village at the time and many houses changed their sites in the village when they were reconstructed. For instance, the composition of Jasir section in January 1956 was as follows:

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621

| *Name of kur* | *Number of houses* | *Name of kur* | *Number of houses* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Yuchyne | 7 | 9. Lyngdoh | 1 |
| 2. Iunei | 4 | 10. Riang | 1 |
| 3. Lorit | 4 | 11. Nongtathiang | 1 |
| 4. Synren | 3 | 12. Loki | 1 |
| 5. Ksaieng | 3 | 13. Kanto | 1 |
| 6. Nongbri | 3 | 14. Kanti | 1 |
| 7. Siem | 2 | 15. Khelwa | 1 |
| 8. Iunoi | 2 | 16. ? | 5 |
| | | Total | 40 |

178 The people said that in Jasir, the Yuchyne was the most influential *kur*,
621 and must have been the original *kur* in this section. However, no clan solidarity
could be observed. These seven households were socially and economically
614 quite independent of each other, as are all other households. As a whole, the
importance of *kur* diminished a great deal in this village. Five households in
Jasir were reluctant to mention their *kur;* some of them did not care about
their *kur;* others were not themselves certain to which *kur* they belonged. The
*kur* is losing its function to a great extent. This can be ascribed to the high
degree of sophistication and mobility. However, except for one Siem woman
who came from the uplands and married a man of this village, all 15 *kur* mention-
ed above are local clans frequently found within the Shella Confederacy. In
621 this area also community endogamy was predominant. Perhaps the Shella

Shella

Confederacy forms a more marked endogamous community, through being cut 621
off geographically and economically from the rest of the Khasi, and socially
from the neighbouring Hindu people.

*The Economy and the People.*

Shella lies along the upper part of the Shella River and stretches upwards 131
along the steep slope, looking down towards the Bengal plain. The climate
of this part of the hills is considered to be one of the worst in tropical India 132
for human habitation. The Bengal plain, though warmer than this area, is
considered more healthy. This border land is the zone of malaria, typhoid, 164
black fever, cholera, etc. None of the Bengalee peasants dare to live in such
an area. However, it is the most fertile for products such as betel-nuts, pan-leaves, 433
oranges, bananas and pineapples, and it also produces limestone. These
people seem to prefer to settle in this zone and to enjoy its prosperity, at the
expense of human lives: every year, especially between March and September, 164
the inhabitants suffer from various fevers and dysentry and other diseaes, many
of the weaker facing death. 648

Before the Partition of India and Pakistan, the products of Shella were 177
carried down the Shella River to Sylhet, one of the biggest centres in East 178
Bengal, which brought unimaginable wealth to the Shella people. Their houses
were built by carpenters from Sylhet. The style and structure of these houses 434
were exceptionally elaborate for the Khasi. They purchased vast rice fields [439]
in the plain, which used to be cultivated by Bengalee and Garo labourers
engaged by them. These Khasi do not themselves know how to cultivate [342]
rice fields; they have always been managers or landowners. Their boys used [166]
to be sent to high schools and colleges in Sylhet. As a result of their trading
with the Bengalee, many of them read and speak fluent Bengalee. There is [464]
no difference between their style of clothing and that of the Bengalee, though [871]
the women maintain their traditional dress in the Shella style. [191]

They have thus been distinguished from the rest of the Khasi not only [291]
geographically, but also economically and culturally. Their personality also
differs sharply from the rest of the Khasi. They are very sociable, and quick, 157
a quality lacking among the Khasi of Sohkynduh and Kongton. They are
clever enough to deal with strangers. The upland Khasi say Shella people 184
are very cunning. This remark shows one side of these people. They had to 648
be cunning, since they traded with the Sylhet Bengalee who were said to be the
most cunning of their race. Their role in the trade and in the history of the 177
modernization of the Hills was considerable. For centuries they represented 178
intellectual Khasi owing to their contact with Hindu civilization, while the
Hills remained in darkness. They assumed an important role when the British [439]
established an administration in the Hills, and even up to now, many leading
Khasi originated from this area: for instance, Lati Hat, the first interpreter
of the British Headquarters at Cherrapunjee; Jeebon Roy, who was the first
Magistrate among the Khasi; Maham Sing, a lawyer and Member of the Legislative
Assembly (the grandson of Jeebon Roy); Nichols Roy, Minister of Health
and Prisons of the Assam Government, Member of the Legislative Assembly,
and Missionary of the Church of God; R. R. Thomas (brother of Nichols Roy),
Principal of the Gauhati University, etc.

Through constant cultural contact with Hindu, and encouraged by their 177
economic prosperity, the Shella Khasi, like the Jaintias, have been much
influenced by Hindu culture. However, this does not mean that the people 648
of Shella adopted the Hindu beliefs. Though there is a small Hindu shrine, 771
and some ceremonial elements were borrowed from the Hindu, most of the 795

177 people remained non-Hindu in their basic beliefs and social customs. Hindu
648 influences are nevertheless predominant in their culture, especially in their way
of living which shows a practical adaptability, somewhat similar to the Japanese
771 acceptance of modern western culture without becoming Christian. In my
795 census of Shella village, the people calling themselves 'Hindu' amount to 40 per
[797] cent of the total, but they are the recent converts to the Ramakrishna School
which established a missionary station at Shella after the Partition. The
[162] Christians constitute 30 per cent of the total, most of them having been converted
during the last ten years, as in the case of the Ramachrishna School.[1]
[458] The rest remain as they were, of Khasi belief. These conversions to either
Ramachrishna or Christianity seem to have been encouraged by the unstable
situation of the people resulting from the recent economic depression in this area.

The Partition of India and Pakistan in August 1947, which drew the borderline
439 a few miles south of Shella village, considerably upset village economy
458 by stopping all trade with Bengal, though a limited amount of trade is allowed
with local people at the border. Because of this political change, all the produce
648 of Shella gardens is rotting away for lack of markets, while all of the rice fields
were taken by Pakistan. Goods now come to Shella only from the uplands,
carried upon men's shoulders over the most difficult pass, which makes everything
very expensive. Many families have sold their gold and other treasures,
and some families are facing starvation.[2]

182 Concerning the conversion to a new religion, an interesting phenomenon
is to be observed. The conversion to Christianity or to Ramakrishna is mostly
171 by individual: I found in my census that the wife and husband often belong to
592 different religions. This is a very different picture from the Garo, among whom
I always found that the husband and wife belonged to the same religion: the
613 conversion of the husband to Christianity was always followed by that of the
771 wife. I think this reflects the structural differences which influence the actual
relationship between the husband and wife. Among these Khasi, instead of
795 the husband and wife, the maternal uncle and his nephews and nieces are mostly
of the same religion. The function of the *iing*, the most important social and
religious unit, thus appears also in the conversion to a new religion, stronger
than that of a domestic unit.

### *Intermarriage.*

648 The close economic and cultural contact of the Shella people and the Bengalee
is not matched by social contact. The essential barrier between the two peoples
771 is the difference of religion which dominates the entire social order in each
society. Though these Khasi were important traders, richer than the neighbouring
563 Hindu peasants, they were considered by the Hindu as outcasts with
whom they never shared social activities. Intermarriages were therefore very
rare. In Shella village, only two exceptional cases were found in my census:

1. A Khasi woman married to a Gurka (cattle-keeper); they live at Shella Bazaar (Sholap).
2. A Khasi woman has marital relation with a Bengalee medical doctor who has resided at Disong in Shella for six years. He already has a Bengalee

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[1] These two entirely different missionary activities are competing with each other, and are somewhat related to the political powers within this area.

[2] The state government is doing its best to provide them with additional facilities: for example, providing air transport for the transportation of oranges from Shella to Gauhati and Calcutta. However, such arrangements cannot cover the great economic loss suffered by the Shella people.

wife who lives with [Shella] him. The Khasi woman lives with her mother. Some 563
say the Khasi woman is his second wife, other say their marriage is not recognized by the public.

Actually, owing to the bad climate, very few non-Khasi live in this area. Besides the two non-Khasi just mentioned, there were a Bengalee tax collector and an Assamese Forest Officer, both of whom lived at Shella Bazaar. Bengalee villages are situated about five miles south of Shella. Except in the bazaar, Bengalee and Khasi have no social contact with each other, and intermarriages have been rare.

However, it is obvious that in the past the Khasi must have had many cases 101
of intermarriage with Bengalee. Among the Khasi, there is a clan called
'Dkhar.' The term 'Dkhar' is also used for the peoples of the plains: Bengalee 563
are called 'Dkhar' by the Khasi. They say that the Dkhar clan originated in Bengalee girls who married Khasi men and who went to live in the Hills. It is said that in older days, the Khasi often raided the Sylhet plain and kidnapped Bengalee girls as well as goods. In Bengalee records of Sylhet, Khasi appear as 'bloody Khasi.' Khasi old men say that in order to increase their population they did sometimes kidnap Bengalee girls, but that they treated these girls very nicely and kindly, no differently from their own people. Since they follow the matrilineal system, they decided to name their descendants 'Dkhar.' It is said that all the present Dkhar people are descendants of such marriages. The Dkhar are found more on the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills i.e. among the Wars.

It seems there were many reasons for the descendants by marriage between the Khasi and the Bengalee to become Khasi. First of all, it is said that in the olden days the Khasi wanted to increase the population by such marriages. At the same time, a Bengalee who married a Khasi became an outcast from his or her own society owing to the caste system, and this inevitably made them Khasi. Secondly, the Khasi were primarily grouped into the *iing*, and they considered the marriage relation as of secondary importance. Hence it was rather difficult to remove by marriage a Khasi man or woman from their native place. Thirdly, Khasi could hardly live in the plain where no betel-nut or pan-leaf gardens were available; they could not engage in rice cultivation in the plain, as the technique is entirely different from the cultivation of betel-nut or pan-leaf. Moreover, they said they could not stand the heat in the plain. Therefore, the orientation of intermarriages was always towards the Khasi community: the Khasi brought outsiders to their own land; they did not themselves leave.

Such a marked tendency on the part of the Khasi to remain attached to 161
their own homeland, is in no way contradictory with the phenomena of their
migration to places outside the Khasi Hills, owing to the exploitation of their 167
homeland and to the increase in population. The formation of Jatinga repre- [563]
sents such an instance; there are also the cases of modern Khasi women from sophisticated urban areas, who easily leave their homeland, after marriage with a non-Khasi; this also appears in the following data on Jatinga.

## JATINGA

Jatinga is a Khasi village situated in the North Cachar Hills, three miles 131
west from Haflong, the headquarters of the North Cachar Hills. The number of 621
households was about sixty in February 1956. Their economy depends on the 433
pan-leaf, orange and pineapple gardens, similar to that of the Shella people.

621

[Jatinga]

[175] This village was founded in 1905 by Khasi immigrants from the Jaintia Hills.
[101] At the entrance of the village, a bust of the founder, Lakhanbang Suchiang,
stands facing towards the east; it was erected on the occasion of the celebration
[211] of their Golden jubilee, in November 1955. Houses are scattered along the
[346] ridge of the moutain to the east and to the west; in the centre is the church.
[771] All the inhabitants are Christians. Before the Partition this was one of the
most modern and prosperous villages in Assam.

Jatinga provides a very interesting instance of the Khasi 'colonial' village.
101 It is surrounded by villages of the Kuki, of the Zemi-Naga, and of the Cacharee,
121 who constitute the main population of the North Cachar Hills, and who are
tribes entirely different from the Khasi, in economy, social organization, language
621 and culture. Therefore, Jatinga is like an island of Khasi community. I took this village as one of my fields, because I was particularly interested to discover how far the Khasi matrilineal organization is kept up in a community thus situated, surrounded by patrilineal tribes, and considerably modernized by Christianization and economic prosperity; and I was also interested in the process of formation of a new village, in comparison with Rinsibara and Joshipara in the Garo Hills.

### *Formation of the Present Population of Jatinga.*

*The first immigrants to Jatinga.*

101 The main population of Jatinga, including the founder, originated in Bataw
village in the Jaintia Hills, twelve miles away from Jaintiapur, the capital of
166 the then Jaintia Rajas. This village is situated on the border of the Jaintia
175 Hills and the East Bengal plain, the location being very similar to that of
Shella, as are their culture and economy. In the later part of the nineteenth
621 century, some members of Bataw village moved to Borkhala, ten miles from
Silchar, one of the biggest villages of the then Cacharee king.

These immigrants who came to Borkhala stayed there about fifteen years before they came to Jatinga. Kloribon, the first daughter of the founder's sister was born there. In November 1905, some Christian Khasi left Borkhala for Jatinga, acting on information gathered from a Welsh Mission at Haflong, that the land of present Jatinga was fertile and fit for their cultivation. They
166 were the first immigrants to Jatinga. The Government record names the
following three persons as the first immigrants to Jatinga: Suchiang Lakhanbang,
551 Tariang, and Suchen Munik. In fact, according to the data which I collected
at Jatinga, Suchiang Lakhanbang was accompanied by the following persons
614 (the names in brackets indicate the clans):

621 his wife, Misibon (Phanwar),[1]
175 his brother, Pryntah, and Pryntah's wife, Sintu (Rupsi),
his sister, Laptho, and Laptho's husband, Munik (Suchen) with their daughter,
  Kloribon, and Munik's younger brother, Sain.
his friend, Tariang.

Soon after their settlement, Sain, the brother of Munik, brought his wife Tahin (Suiam) from Jaintia. Misibon brought her younger sister, Diasibon. Tariang who came with Lakhanbang afterwards called his wife, Palong. But having spent some time there, they left eventually for another place, so that

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[1] Misibon was a native of the Cherrapunjee area of the Khasi Hills (not of Jaintia like the others). She was a school teacher at Cherrapunjee, and later became a teacher at a school near Jaintiapur, where she married Lakhanbang.

there are none of their descendants in Jatinga. Summing up, the first party 166
who settled at Jatinga was composed of people of the following five clans:
551

1. Suchiang — Lakhanbang, his sister, Laptho, and her daughter, Kloribon, his brother, Pryntah. 614
2. Suchen — Munik and his younger brother, Sain.
3. Phanwar — Misibon and her younger sister, Diasibon. 621
4. Rupsi — Sintu, the wife of Pryntah.
5. Suiam — Tahin, the wife of Sain. 175

Among them, Suchen had no female member. Phanwar had no successor: Misibon had no issue and Diasibon did not marry. Therefore, Suchiang, Rupsi and Suiam are the oldest clans in present Jatinga. Suchiang and Rupsi especially are the dominant and richest groups among the present population.

This was the time when the railway from Gauhati to Silchar was being 166
constructed. Some Khasi labourers were working at Haflong on the construction of the railway. After the foundation of Jatinga, these Khasi workers 175
established marriage relations with the Khasi of Jatinga, and finally, upon
completion of the railway, many of them became the inhabitants of Jatinga. 458
The present members of the Dome and Siangshai clans are the descendants of
these people, and they form a considerable number of the present inhabitants 621
of Jatinga. Besides them, there were a few other Khasi at Haflong who were [499]
engaged in trading business. In the course of time, they also had marital relations with Jatinga people and came to Jatinga. [464]

After five years had elapsed they found that in spite of their hard work the land was not favourable to them. Many of them left Jatinga. This was the hardest period of Jatinga history.

*The second migration (1919-1925).*

The railway which once had been blocked was reopened in 1919. The people [499]
who had left Jatinga came back to settle there. This time the circumstances
seemed to them quite favourable. The pan trees which they had planted [245]
earlier were growing and they could gather considerable produce. The village grew bigger around 1920 as a result of new immigrants from Jaintia; most of them were people from Bataw, the village of the founder. In this period, many immigrants came from Jaintia not only to Jatinga but also to Sylhet, Borkhala and other places outside the Khasi-Jaintia Hills. It seems that by this time the over-populated Jaintia realised that these areas were favourable for their new home. However, the successive waves of Jaintia immigrants to Jatinga ceased by 1925, its population having reached saturation point.

Orange production brought economic prosperity to the people of Jatinga. [245]
Wealthy villagers employed temporary labourers from the Jaintia Hills every
year. Some of these labourers came with their families and others came individually. [464] During their stay at Jatinga, some of them married and settled there. Hence, there are also descendants of such labourers among the present inhabitants of Jatinga.

### *Some Aspects of Descent Groups.*

Throughout the history of Jatinga, immigrations have always been undertaken 621
by a family (elementary family, siblings) or by an individual, but never
by a group of clan members. Therefore, the present population is grouped in [175]
small descent groups according to each migration. Though some of them [614]
happened to have the same clan name, their history of migration and their [166]

[Jatinga]

621 descent grouping are often different. This is a very similar pattern to the
[184] mobility which I discussed in Sohkynduh and Kongton (see p. 112).

One of the outstanding features in this community is the strong paternal
178 authority, established especially in the first generation, because the father's
(husband's) contribution was very important in such circumstances: their
593 domestic units were completely independent from the *iing* either of husband
or wife. Some of them came with their wives, and many younger ones and
61 their sons brought their wives from their homeland afterwards, thus practising
virilocal marriage.

621 They have an interesting social usage which reflects the importance of the husband of the first generation. This is the addition of the name of the husband of the first generation to the matrilineal clan name in order to differentiate each particular descent group established at Jatinga within the same clan. For instance, Rupsi-Tah, Rupsi-Loh, Rupsi-Khla and Rupsi-Lati are found in the Rupsi clan. Rupsi-Tah is one of the lines of the first immigrants to Jatinga, which I have mentioned as Rupsi: Tah was taken from Pryntah, the husband of Sintu (Rupsi) (see p. 171). Thus the present inhabitants of Jatinga are very conscious of their father or grandfather, though they strictly follow the matrilineal descent rule. From such a usage of naming a clan, the Indian officer, who gave me some information about Jatinga before I went there, made the mistaken deduction that they had changed from matrilineal to patrilineal, assuming this to have come about as a result of the influence of patrilineal tribes around Jatinga. But this is simply due to the fact, firstly, that they hold in high regard the man of the first generation, because of his great contribution; secondly, that they distinguish themselves from members of the same clan according to the descent group established at each immigration; in other words, it indicates each *iing* grouping in the village.

178 The fundamental Khasi social organization based on the matrilineal system
did not change at all. I could observe in Jatinga exactly the same principle
184 in action as I had found in Sohkynduh and Kongton. The village endogamy
has also been well established in the present generation: there are about 20 dif-
582 ferent clans which can intermarry, and taking a spouse from an outside com-
61 munity has become very rare nowadays. Marriage patterns in relation to the
*iing* structure and all its related aspects are surprisingly similar to that of the
621 communities in the Khasi Hills. The solidarity of the *iing* is even greater in
Jatinga, particularly among the rich, because of the greater accumulation of wealth and greater economic activity, which also increases the authority of the *iing* as manager of considerable property—this was also the case with the Shella people. Jatinga demonstrates that in spite of colonization and of a significant change in economic activities, Khasi social organization has maintained itself intact. This situation is in contrast with the considerable social changes observed among the Garo community in colonial areas like Rinsibara and Joshipara.

621

### *Intermarriage.*

178 From the earliest period of the establishment of Jatinga up to the present,
582 some changing aspects of marriage patterns relating to intermarriages are to
be observed.

563 As I stated before, in the earlier period, the people used to bring their spouses
from their homeland, but they also married neighbouring tribal peoples, namely,
563 the Zemi-Naga, the Kuki and the Cacharee of villages close to Jatinga, and
also the Lushai, the Bengalee, the Moslem and the Anglo-Indian who lived
621 in Haflong, the biggest political and commercial centre in the Hills, situated

[Jatinga]

three miles away from Jatinga. As one may expect in such a situation, quite 563
a number of intermarriages with these peoples appear in my census of Jatinga. 621
The resultant of these intermarriages was that when the couple and their children lived in Jatinga, they were considered to have become Khasi; otherwise they were held to be non-Khasi, whether the spouse was man or woman. This orientation of social recognition of the result of intermarriage was generally seen among Khasi in such situations, not only in the case of Jatinga.

The following are extracts of intermarriages from my genealogical table of Jatinga people. 563 591 621

*A*. Cases of intermarriages in which the descendants became Khasi.

1. A woman of the Dome clan married a Kuki man. All members of the present Dome clan at Jatinga are their descendants.
2. A woman of the Rymbai clan married a Kuki man as her second marriage. Their descendants are Rymbai.
3. A man of the Suchiang clan married a Mikir woman, and lived in Jatinga. They had one daughter who married a man of the Hua clan of Jatinga. They named this woman's line 'Shadap' as one of the Khasi clans. Later this Mikir woman's sister's daughter married a man of Rupsi-Lati, and their descendants were also named 'Shadap' by the villagers. Thus Shadap clan was created by a Mikir woman who married a Khasi man of Jatinga.
4. A Khasi man married a Lushai woman and lived at Aijal, the headquarters of the Lushai Hills. They said he became Lushai. Later a man of the Pajat clan of Jatinga married his daughter from Aijal. This couple lives at Jatinga and has several children. The villagers said they have to give them a new clan name. It is under consideration.

*B*. Cases of intermarriages leading to the emigration of Jatinga inhabitants.

5. A man of Jatinga married a woman of Zemi-Naga as his second marriage and lives at his wife's village.
6. A woman (the daughter of the woman of Rymbai, who married a Kuki: A-2) married a Moslem man and lives at Haflong.
7. A woman of Rymbai married a Panjabee and lives at Shillong. This woman is (B-6)'s mother's sister's daughter.
8. A woman of Siangshai clan married an Assamese and lives at Gauhati.
9. A woman of Rupsi-Tah married an Anglo-Indian and has gone to the United Provinces.
10. A woman of Jatinga married a man of Zemi-Naga and went to his village.
11. A woman of Jatinga married a man of Cacharee and lived at his village some time, but she came back to Jatinga after divorcing him.

*A* cases belong to the earlier period when Jatinga had a shortage of population, [161]
while *B* cases, except 10 and 11, are found among the present younger generation. The population, which had increased rapidly in the last twenty years with economic prosperity, is suffering from the recent economic depression caused by the Partition as well as from the great damages done to their orange gardens and pan-leaf gardens by tree diseases. Moreover they have an unbalanced rate of birth according to sex: females are more numerous than males. Therefore, many daughters marry out as shown in the cases of *B*. The above-cited cases are only concerned with intermarriages with non-Khasi, but there are still other women who married Khasi men and who reside outside Jatinga, as for example, at Haflong and Shillong.

In the village there are still many unmarried girls without suitable spouses. 178
In the olden days, it was less difficult to marry neighbouring tribal peoples. 563
621

[Jatinga]

178 like the Zemi-Naga, the Cacharee and the Kuki. But after the period of
563 economic prosperity as I shall describe in the next section, the Jatinga people
reached a rather high level of education, while most of the neighbouring tribes
621 remained illiterate. Their standard of living likewise improved. Fashionable
[871] girls of Jatinga who have studied at the Convent school in Shillong, and speak
English and Hindi, cannot marry half-naked tribesmen who work in the jungle.
They prefer to intermarry with Moslem, Panjabee or Assamese who belong to
amore sophisticated community, and through whom they can enjoy urban life.
Thus the orientation of the intermarriage of the people of Jatinga has changed,
along with the growth of Jatinga.

It should be noted that intermarriages came mostly through the contacts at Haflong, where people used to go once a week for the bazaar, rather than through direct contacts with neighbouring villages.

*Economy of Jatinga and its Relation to Neighbouring Tribes.*

178 It is very interesting to find two different kinds of economy in the same
ecological background: Jatinga Khasi practise pan-leaf and orange cultivation
171 and depend mainly on a trading economy, while the other neighbouring tribal
peoples practise jhum cultivation, almost a subsistence economy. This situa-
245 tion has remained unchanged for the last fifty years since the establishment
of Jatinga village.

The first Jatinga immigrants occupied one ridge of the mountain where the
101 present Jatinga is situated. Formerly, this land belonged to the Zemi-Naga,
245 one of the old inhabitants of the Cachar Hills, who possessed a vast jungle area
for jhum cultivation. It seems that there was no objection to the Khasi occupying this small spot: it was apparently too small an area for the jhum cultivator—pan-leaf cultivation of the Khasi requires less than one twentieth of the land of the usual jhum cultivation. The Khasi who started pan-leaf cultivation were able to accumulate some capital, and after several years they started orange gardens. They had had experience of orange cultivation in their homeland, but this was the first time they had operated commercially.

245 The success of this orange cultivation was beyond their dreams. Hearing
of good oranges at Jatinga, many Bengalee merchants from Dacca, Sylhet,
434 Silchar and Gauhati began to come to buy them. Moreover, the village had
the great advantage of being situated near the railway station. Oranges were
439 sold by carloads. Unimaginable wealth came to the Jatinga people. Especi-
ally the founder's family, including his brother's and sister's, became extraor-
[496] dinarily wealthy; their income used to be Rs. 20,000 a year. The children
[871] were sent to the school which was established in the village and some
were educated at colleges in Dacca, Sylhet and Shillong. The villagers had
[362] beautiful houses built by Manipuri and Bengalee carpenters. Actually the
houses of Jatinga were known as some of the best construction in Assam.

Like the Shella people, they were managers of gardens and employed workers.
245 Wealthy households used to engage several labourers annually, most of them
from Jaintia where the Jatinga people had originated. These workers were
46 provided with shelter in the servant quarters of their employer's house, but
they had to provide meals for themselves. They were paid daily according to
the work done. They were available to other households, when their employer
had no work. Some labourers were also engaged locally among the Zemi-
Naga, the Cacharee and the Kuki, though not as many as among the Jaintia.
245 These local tribes were fairly well occupied by their jhum cultivation, and not
464 used to being employed as workers. Therefore, most of them were not regular

(Jatinga)

245 464 workers and they were few in number.[1] They were particularly employed for such work as the clearing of jungle for new pan gardens in summer.

245 464 465 In the orange season (December to February) the number of workers increased and they were paid more: Rs. 1/8 were paid[2] for one load (one person carrying 80 pounds of oranges, from an orange garden to the railway station—about two miles). Usually a worker made three to five trips a day. Many workers from Jaintia used to come for this particular season.

243 464 Semi-permanent workers were engaged for wet rice fields. They were usually Hindu cultivators: since these Khasi and other tribes do not know the technique of wet cultivation, plains people like the Biharee immigrants were engaged. These workers were provided with servants' quarters where they lived with their wives and children. However, very few Jatinga households possessed rice fields.

245 434 431 161 458 The economic prosperity of Jatinga reached its climax during the period from 1934 to 1940. Since 1941, the orange production has been decreasing. In 1945, a serious disease attacked the orange gardens as well as the pan-leaf gardens. Besides, by depriving Jatinga, as it had Shella, of their most important markets, Dacca and Sylhet, the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 caused a serious economic depression in the whole region. On the other hand, because of the past prosperity, the population has rapidly increased during the last ten years. The serious economic condition of Jatinga is illustrated in the petition which was submitted by the Jatinga people when the Governor of Assam visited these areas in January 1956. It runs thus:

> "Since the last ten years or so, with the increase of population in the village and with the loss of fertility of the soil, the people were faced with economic depression. At present they are facing acute shortage of land they have also no scope to adopt other forms of cultivation like jhuming and wet rice cultivation, etc. Moreover, there has been successive attack of Bright's disease which destroyed and wiped out all the orange and pan gardens. And as such, majority of the families have to depend for their livelihood on daily wages. . . ."

182 434 [433] [243] It is indeed a serious situation for them, because the Khasi do not produce staple foods, such as rice; their economy is completely dependent on the trade of their products by which they purchase their main provisions, clothes, etc. Other peoples round Jatinga, being jhum cultivators, can at least get rice and cotton: the minimum requirements, staple foods and clothing are available even in the worst conditions, so that they can at least maintain themselves though the standard of living is low. As I stated before, a few households in Jatinga possessed rice fields, but the majority had none. Recently they rented some plots of jhum field for rice cultivation from Zemi-Naga of neighbouring villages.[3] However, its yield was but a small percentage of their consumption. A few

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[1] If they had worked in the gardens of Jatinga, they might have got more profit than from their own jhum fields. For one day's labour, they got Ans. 8/. For one month, they could earn Rs. 15 with which they could buy about 4-5 maunds of rice (one maunds paddy cost Rs. 3-4). For one year it became 50 maunds, which was impossible to produce in a jhum field by a single person's labour. [435]

[2] These rates, including the figures of note 1, apply to 1956.

[3] Jatinga villagers told me that Zemi-Naga were kind enough to lend them their field for a negligible rent, though they had not enough for themselves. Zemi-Naga said that they owed much to Jatinga in the past, so that now they sympathised with the conditions of Jatinga, and offered some parts of their jhum field. [427] [428]

182 464 very wealthy households still maintain their former economic activities, but the majority have been impoverished, becoming daily labourers for the wealthy ones or for road construction. Thus considerable internal economic differentiation has begun to appear in the community.

182 245 648 Though the recent economic depression brought poverty to Jatinga, the standard of living is still strikingly higher than that of neighbouring tribes. Studying such economic aspects of Jatinga, I wondered at first why these neighbouring tribes have remained as they were, except for temporary employment at Jatinga: why, looking at the prosperity of Jatinga, they did not adopt the way of the Jatinga people?

Indeed some of them attempted to imitate the Jatinga economy, but the results were unfortunately not favourable to them. First, both pan-leaf and orange cultivations were entirely new to the tribal peoples, and the technique was quite different from that of dry rice cultivation in the *jhum* field. Pan cultivation requires very delicate care which is almost impossible to manage for people who have been accustomed to the primitive *jhuming* cultivation. For instance, when they go into pan gardens, they have to wash themselves and put on special clean clothes in order to prevent the spread of epidemic leaf-disease. Tribal people, who seldom wash their clothes, or mostly go naked, could hardly keep pan gardens. In this respect the Khasi are entirely different, having specialized in this economy for a long period, even as they believe, from time immemorial.

On the other hand, the technique of orange cultivation is much easier than that of pan-leaf, but it takes several years to obtain a yield; it requires considerable capital to begin with. For the *jhum* cultivators, who usually did not have cash income nor funds, it was almost impossible to start it, while the Khasi were able to raise funds from the selling of the pan-leaf. Furthermore, the [423] management of such gardens, either pan-leaf or orange, differs also from that of the *jhum* field as it entirely depends on individual enterprise based on private land ownership, which is new for these tribes where the community owns the land. Therefore the possibility of starting orange gardens is restricted to special individuals among them belonging to exceptionally rich and powerful households. A few households in neighbouring villages did, in fact, start orange gardens, adopting the technique of the Jatinga people. This was around 1942 and they were expecting to have the yield around 1950. However, unfortunately, when their oranges began to come into production, orange disease started in Jatinga and spread all over these areas. Their dream therefore never came true.

Besides oranges, some of them also established gardens of bananas, jackfruits and papayas, which were more successful than the oranges. These plantations started much earlier than oranges in this area, though not in great quantity. The products were sold to the Jatinga people who sold them again to Bengalee merchants. The question arises why were they not sold directly to Bengalee merchants, when the profit would have been much greater.

182 44 648 This aspect of the market economy touches upon very interesting problems concerning the relations between tribal and Hindu peoples. Such tribal peoples who live on a primitive subsistence level usually do not have direct contact with the peoples of the plains. There is always an intermediary between them. In this case it is the Jatinga people who know both tribal life and Hindu life. They are also in between culturally. If a tribal cultivator sells his produce to a Hindu merchant, he would most certainly be cheated by the cunning merchant, as he is quite ignorant of trade. Tribal men do deal with markets directly, but only on a small scale at Shillong bazaar, and without making a profit: it is just the exchange of their basketful of *jhum* produce for an item

spade or some dried fish, etc. Products such as large quantities of fruits should 182
be sold to the Jatinga people who buy them at reasonable prices.

The Khasi are born traders. This must be closely related with their eco- 44
nomic techniques, such as pan cultivation which makes it impossible for them 648
to live without trading. Hence, though they are hill people, they have had close economic contact with the peoples of the surrounding plains. At the same time, some of them have had a very similar economy to that of other tribes, such as that of Sohbyndoh and of Kongthon; hence they are familiar with tribal economy. On the whole, their dealings with the tribes as well as with the plains peoples are fair, though they are hard bargainers. Indeed the Khasi are quite welcomed by both sides. Thus the Khasi play an important role as intermediary between the tribes living in the hills and the Hindu (and Moslems) living in the plains.[1]

The economic contact is the most important of the many contacts between 648
Jatinga and other tribal villages. Social contact, as appeared in intermarriages,
is a rather marginal matter for the total population. Cultural contact is negli- 182
gible: I only observed one indication—some fashionable tribal girls sometimes
wear Khasi women's dress when they go to the Haflong bazaar. In their contact [191]
with tribes, *the Jatinga Khasi speak Hindi which is the common language at* Haflong bazaar for all tribes and peoples in this area. A few men of Jatinga speak some tribal language, but some of the tribal speak the Khasi language.

In spite of such great differences in culture, economy and social organization, the relationship between the Jatinga people and the tribes has remained very friendly. For instance, as I mentioned before (p. 173, note 3), the tribes lent their land to Jatinga people who were suffering from a great economic depression. Their actual behaviour also reflects such a friendly relationship. It is said that at the time of the Golden Jubilee of Jatinga in November 1955, many Zemi-Naga, Kuki, and Cacharee came and performed their dances for the celebration.

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[1] The important role of the Khasi as intermediary is not only in the economic field, but also in the political and cultural fields: nowadays many Khasi officers are sent to tribal areas by the Government. They are very efficient in dealing with such work, because they are used to deal with both tribal and plain peoples.

[P. 178 is blank]

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